

SECRET MEMOIRS
OF THE
COURT OF PETERSBURG:

PARTICULARLY TOWARDS THE END OF THE
REIGN OF CATHARINE II.

AND THE COMMENCEMENT OF THAT OF

PAUL I.

FORMING
A DESCRIPTION OF THE MANNERS OF PETERSBURG
AT THE CLOSE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY;

AND CONTAINING

VARIOUS ANECDOTES,
COLLECTED DURING A RESIDENCE OF TEN YEARS IN THAT CAPITAL.

TOGETHER WITH REMARKS ON
THE EDUCATION OF THE GRAND-DUKES,
THE MANNERS OF THE LADIES, AND THE RELIGION OF THE PEOPLE.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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WHAT REVOLUTIONS MAY BE EXPECTED
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IF, as some pretend, the French revolution be destined to spread over the globe, Russia will assuredly be the last place it will reach: it is on the frontiers

of this vast empire that the French Hercules will erect his two pillars, and that French liberty will long read, *Ne plus ultra*: it is there that a new world is still hidden from her: there absolute power seems to defy all opposition—a contest may, however, ere long, take place in the plains of Germany, which may decide the fate of the world. The principles which at present prevail in the east and north, are decidedly contrary to those which have of late distinguished the south and the west. Already the continent seems to be wholly divided between two preponderating empires, France and Russia, the views and interests of which are diametrically opposite: they seek an opportunity of jostling each other, and will crush in the shock the secondary powers by which they are still separated. It will be the combat of Day against Night, the last conflict of Philosophy and Reason against Barbarism and Ignorance.

A Pupil
of Godwins

Not

Not that light and truth may not be found in Russia; but they who possess them, still more prudent than Fontenelle*, are so far from daring to open their hands to spread them abroad, that they strive only to stifle them; for they who have knowledge are the only persons interested in maintaining ignorance. Till there shall be found in Russia a numerous body of enlightened men, suffering by that state of servitude under which the people groan, a spontaneous revolution must not be expected in that country.

If anything at present could hasten the moment of attack, it is an ukase which Paul has just published; and which, by abolishing the degrees of nobility conferred by the possession of military rank

* He says somewhere, "If I had my hand full of truths, I would take care not to open it."

and civil offices, has created a true *third estate*, never before known in Russia; a few emancipated vassals that have become tradesmen, or foreign mechanics, did not deserve this name: there was scarcely any distinction of persons except slaves and nobles. All who held any rank, civil or military, that is to say, all who had a little money or education, acquired nobility or its privileges, and hastened to enjoy the affectation of its prejudices and spirit: but as soon as this enlightened part of the nation shall lose its claim to a participation in these honours and advantages, it will turn to the side of the people. The void heretofore caused by absolute power between the slave or peasant, and the freeman or noble, is now filled up. The third estate will rise up as a giant; with one powerful hand it will exalt the slave, with the other it will lower the noble; and perhaps before a century

century shall pass away, it may have reduced them to a level more happy for both than their present state.

Another proceeding of the emperor, which, in contradiction to its original intent, is likely to forward a change, is the ordinance proscribing printing-houses in his dominions. He has permitted only three, for the purpose of printing his ukases, and books for the church, or such as can stand the triple ordeal of government, the schools, and the Greek church*. In thus attempting to suppress learning and knowledge, he has rendered them the greatest service of which he was capable. The moment liberty and philosophy possess one free press, the greatest

* He has since carried the proscription of books to great perfection: he has even prohibited the importation of foreign catalogues, and ordered the booksellers to put on such books as can go through the triple examination, *by imperial permission*, instead of *imperial liberty*, which were the words used before.

benefit

benefit that can be done them, is to destroy all others. All the books that have produced the revolution which the present age has witnessed, are to be found in Russia in great numbers : such as may still be introduced into that country from foreign parts, even from Vienna itself, will be better than any that could be printed there with permission * : I maintain, therefore,

* If the reader wish for a specimen of the scrupulosity of the Russian censor, I will give him one or two prior to Paul's tripling the office. In the reign of Catharine, one Legendre was the censor for French books printed at Petersburg. From a poem, in which the god of love was introduced, he struck out the words *ce dieu malin*, observing, that it was indecent to give the epithet of *malicious* to a deity. He allowed the author, however, to substitute the word *badin*, "waggish," for it. Another time he struck out of an ode in praise of Catharine a verse, in which were the following lines :

Partout la foudre gronde et le glaive s'aiguise ;
Un roi tombe du trône, et son sceptre se brise.

" Each sword is sharpen'd, heav'n with thunder shakes,
" A monarch falls, his pow'rless sceptre breaks."

This

fore, that Paul has done great service to liberty and letters.

Russia, however, is still very far from enjoying this benefit in all its extent. The Russian, degraded by ages of slavery, resembles those degenerate animals to whom the domestic state is become second nature. It must be gradually, and by long and difficult paths, that he returns to liberty: he is yet a stranger to the meaning of the word: to him, to be free signifies to be able to quit the glebe to which he is chained, and lead an idle vagabond life. Work he detests, because he has never worked for himself: he has not even an idea of property; his fields, his goods, his wife, his children, himself, belong to a master, who can dispose of

This was an allusion to the preparations for war in 1790, and the commencement of the revolution. At that time it was a political heresy to dare surmise that Lewis XVI. would fall from the throne.

them,

them, and who does dispose of them at pleasure. He is interested in nothing, because he does not possess anything: his attachment to his village is that of an ox to the crib to which he is accustomed. He is without country, without laws, without religion. Christianity, as taught and practised among the Russians, no more deserves the name of religion, than the sound which the carman uses to direct his horses, deserves the name of language, as will be evinced in a subsequent chapter.

The despair of some of these wretched peasants may occasionally, as heretofore, produce local rebellion against their lords; but to expect a general revolution in Russia would be chimerical. Russia is too extensive, and too thinly inhabited, for the people to rise in a mass; for a body so scattered and spread abroad would soon be subdued. Paltry towns, containing a few thousands of inhabitants, are commonly

monly at a distance of more than a hundred miles from each other, without any seeming connection but hamlets dispersed in the woods every twelve or fifteen miles, and almost every one of which has its particular ruler. How can a people so scattered ever combine? A single regiment, under the command of a Suvarof, would be sufficient to exterminate the population of a whole government.

The natural obstacles, which *muscovitism* will long oppose to all innovations, even the most salutary, are every day reinforced by auxiliaries arriving in Russia from foreign countries. Russia is now the common asylum of ignorance, barbarism, superstition, and prejudice. Nowhere do men, imbued with such principles, meet so friendly a reception as in that country. There they find the infancy of their own country, the golden age of the feudal system. On their arrival, they

they are astonished to find themselves already too enlightened, too far advanced, for this happy land: afraid of appearing dangerous, they with joy replunge into the thick night of barbarism in which they were born. Thus the fluggard closes his eyes, and sinks again into that slumber from which the sun-beams had roused him in spite of himself. The man who carries into those climes something of knowledge and sentiment, finds it gradually obscured and extinguished in his heart; and if he happen to obtain a grant of a few hundred souls as the price of his own, he thinks it very just and very fortunate that there should be slaves, and that he is one himself*. This mode of purchasing

* Nothing is so fatal to humanity as men who have knowledge without principles, or who abjure those of which their conscience reminds them. They resemble those worm-eaten fruits, which are tempting to the eye, but prove nauseous to the taste. These
men

purchasing those whose knowledge may be useful while their probity may be dangerous, is so infallible, and has so much the appearance of generosity, that it is to be wondered it is not oftener had recourse to. The gift of a few score peasants might change even the soul of a Frenchman to that of a Russian. *written by a Frenchman*

Yet even in the court of Russia, and among the nobility, there are some lofty and generous spirits, who, without being the dupes of a system of perfect equality, are indignant at the degrading self-denial required of them: for absolute power suits none but barbarians, and this the Russian gentry are no longer. Despotism, far from softening, and assuming a less disgusting mien in proportion as men's

men are particularly dangerous, when they have art enough to conceal errors, shocking in themselves, under specious sophisms.

manners

manners grow civilised, becomes more and more stiff, and renders its yoke more ridiculous and more odious ; it endeavours to return to barbarism, as the people advance towards civilisation. In other European countries power has descended a few steps from its throne, in deference to reason and public opinion * ; but in Russia it mounts still higher, and tramples even on common sense. Till the eighteenth century, it is true, the progress of

* The conduct of the young king of Prussia exhibits a striking contrast to that of Paul: one endeavours to exalt himself up to heaven ; the other, to descend to the level of his people, and appear only the first servant of the state. In the same paper, I read a Russian proclamation, which condemns a dozen unfortunate Poles to have their noses and ears cut off, and to be sent to Siberia, for having been *wanting in the respect and fidelity* sworn to his Russian majesty (it is not said in what) ; and a letter from the king of Prussia to a little town, in which an insurrection had taken place, and in which Frederic-William speaks like a father to his children—like a good king, who is proud to be a man.

the

the human mind in Russia was so far from parallel to what it was in the rest of Europe, that the date of the complete enslavement of the Russians, is that of the establishment of commons and emancipation of vassals everywhere else. It is somewhat remarkable, that the tzar who drove the Tatars out of Russia, was the same that imposed on the Russians the servitude of the feudal system, before unknown in that country *.

This stubborn conduct must in the end prove fatal to that pride and folly which it is meant to protect : the present race of mankind requires management. Power, exhibiting itself in the form of a graceful woman crowned with glory, with ease re-

* This was the tzar Ivan Basilovitch I. The Russian history notwithstanding styles him the deliverer ; and prince Sch**** has written a tolerable epic poem in honour of him.

ceived

ceived homage, in which nothing was felt humiliating : the character of the warrior had something in it of chivalry, and that of the courtier of gallantry, which seemed to ennoble it ; but to require personal adoration, without any of the qualities that might justify it, must be revolting to every reflecting mind.

Reason can never become extinct in minds which it has once inhabited : like the lion in the desert, it retires slowly at the sight of a numerous and cowardly troop ; but if these have the audacity to pursue and harass him even in his lair, he bursts through their weapons, and conquers or dies. Governors should dread and avoid such actions as may drive reason, honour, and good sense to extremities : the exaction of unnecessary homage may accelerate some unexpected catastrophe.

strophe *. There is no likelihood of a revolution, after the French model, taking place in Russia as yet ; but there may be one, for which it is already ripe—that of a more enlightened aristocracy.

It must be confessed, that the friend of liberty and of Russia cannot wish for a change of any other sort at present ; it is the only one of which this vast empire is yet susceptible. The people, in the deplorable state in which we see them, are incompatible to the enjoyment of liberty : they must be prepared for it, they must be brought to desire it, before it is offered to them ; for now they would abuse or reject it. It may be said with truth, that the Russian government is less inclined to tyranny, than the people are prone to

* The French emigrants are of opinion, that the revolution in France would never have taken place, had not the queen been too negligent of etiquette, and the king too popular !

slavery ;

slavery; so low are they debased, so much is their nature changed. With them, therefore, nothing can be done at present*.

Though the nobles still continue the habit of bending before the sovereign, while they exact still greater submission in their turn from their slaves, yet are they becoming daily more and more enlightened. They have been corrupted rather than civilised; but they retain some virtues, which the last thousand years have been unable to annihilate: worthy in future of a government less barbarous, they will require laws written in legible characters. They begin to feel the weight of their chains: some day they will burst

* When I speak here of the Russian people, I do not include the Tatarian hordes, or the Cossack tribes, who still retain some remembrances of a sort of liberty; but it is the liberty of barbarians, who employ it only to make slaves.

them,

them, and then lighten those of their vassals*: and perhaps that day is not very far distant. Many young minds are warmed with the examples of antiquity, and meditate in secret on modern events: many, after having forgotten themselves for a moment in the history of other nations, turn back their eyes with dissatisfaction to their own, and to themselves. How in fact can such a government exist at the end of the eighteenth century, in a country not surrounded with a triple wall of brass, in a country where several can read, and some can think? Will Russians in future suffer themselves to be treated like

* Let not the term of nobles startle the reader: those of Russia do not form, like those of France and Germany, that feudal and chivalrous body which literally conceived itself sprang of different blood from other mortals, and which remained separate from them by its morals and prejudices, as much as by its privileges. The word noble, both in French and German, marks this difference: for it designates an innate quality of the mind: *dworannoï*, in Russian, the term for a nobleman, implies only a *proprietor of land*, because land can be possessed by none but a freeman.

the people of Morocco? In our age, and in Europe, justice, glory, virtues, or benefits, can alone sanction the possession of absolute power, and induce us to pardon the possessor. Reason cannot be compelled to silence, but by being dazzled with great actions. Despotism is an idol, the arm of which is iron, but the feet of clay: its body is of gigantic size, but it is hollow: its head is hidden in a thick cloud, which slaves take for heaven: there are none but fools, however, who continue to worship it; none but cowards who pretend to pay it adoration.

When I point out the nobility, as the only body in Russia on which liberty can first rely on her setting foot in this empire, I do not mean the contemptible herd that attends the court, as a flight of unclean ravens follows the camp, to devour the carcases. There, are everywhere vile and upstart valets, still more so than those who were born courtiers. It is neither
the

the throne, the altar, nor the person of the sovereign, that produces their attachment; it is the most sordid cowardice: the man in favour and power is always the god they adore. I have seen them creep from favourite to favourite, as a caterpillar crawls from leaf to leaf, leaving his excrement on the last he gnawed. There is not perhaps one of these wretches who now kneel to kiss the hand of Paul, who would not have cut off that hand a few months ago, at the command of a Potemkin. From such dastards nothing can be expected but court intrigues or court revolutions, already too frequent in Russia, which serve only to prolong barbarism or misery. But a few powerful families, in which knowledge has taken its seat, as a stranger beneath the roof of hospitality * ; a few young men of courage

* Many of these families have not less than twenty thousand slaves, towns, cannons, immense wealth, and, above all, relations, who are generals and commanders of regiments. This is more than enough: one battle would decide the business in their favor. — *himself at all*

and talents, desirous of a name, will perhaps avail themselves of some happy circumstances, to qualify at least the oppressive forms of government, till something better can be done ; to secure a sovereign worthy of power upon the throne, and give to a senate or council of some sort the influence now confined to unworthy favorites ; to prescribe at least some bounds to abuses, which at present have not any. What a Dolgoruky could perform half a century ago, others may effect more permanently now *. This project, however, it must be confessed, can be conceived only by the noblest ambition, totally divested of petty interests : it can be executed only by great courage, great reputation, and still greater perseverance. There

* The families of Dolgoruky, Galitzin, Soltikof, &c. have often deserved well of Russia. They were the principal persons concerned in shaking off the unworthy tyranny of a Mentchikof and a Biron ; and who would have established a less arbitrary government at the death of Peter II.

is a great difference between the possession of talents to fill an important station with dignity, and having the little arts necessary to obtain or preserve it: hence they, who are discontented and in disgrace, are generally the choice of the nobility and of the inhabitants of Mosco: if these unite, and once agree on a plan, the reign of blockheads is over. Of all dominations that of folly and ignorance over reason and knowledge is the most absurd, and most shameful to bear. In Russia every path to glory is blocked against the ambitious youth, who is conscious of the powers to reach it. Would he find glory in vanquishing savages, or conquering *steppes* *, under the orders of a favorite, a fool, or a barbarian? Would he see it in the antichamber of the court? Would he place it in the pursuit of a servile routine, or in forwarding plots, the impolicy or ab-

* *Steppes* is the name given to the desert plains that surround Russia. It is the best a Russian general can do.

furdity of which he durst not blame, at some foreign court, or in some office at home? No: for him the only road to glory is in a new order of things, to which everything invites him.

But a nearer and more unfortunate catastrophe, which seems to threaten the tzars, is a dismemberment of their extensive territory. For a century past, the empire of Russia, like the paste under the rolling-pin of the cook, has grown thin in proportion as it has been extended. All the bulk of the centre has been squeezed towards the circumference, to form a border, which is deceptive with regard to its real strength: these thickened borders will separate from the centre, which will become unable to support them. If we cast our eyes on the map, we shall be surprised at the vast extent of that romantic empire, reaching from the banks of the Vistula to the farthest end of Asia, nay even to America, and from the borders

ders of the sea of Asia to Lapland. It comprises almost a fourth of the inhabited continents. This superficies reckons at most thirty millions of inhabitants; and these of twenty nations, differing in manners, language, and religion. And this immense territory is governed, from the centre of Petersburg, might we not say from the midst of the court of the palace, from the middle of a battalion drawn up in a square, where five or six officers salute the emperor with their spontoons! To me the Russian empire appears like that spider, which with a very small body has long legs, that fall off at the least obstruction it meets in its gigantic march. Less than a Potemkin would suffice to occasion this dismemberment; but Russia will not gain much by it *.

The

* From the turn affairs are taking, it is not hazarding too much to predict, that the first crack in this huge

The happiest hope which Russia can entertain, is that she may one day see on the throne an emperor sufficiently wise and great to give it laws, to which he himself will submit; a prince of such magnanimity, as to be ashamed to reign inglorious over a people destitute of rights, and who may be capable of forming from the summit of his throne a gentle and easy descent, to arrive at freedom without a fall. This is what a true friend of Russia and humanity ought to wish; this alone can now immortalize an emperor. Peter I. himself lamented, that he was only the despot of a nation of slaves. At an interview he had with the king of Prussia at Parienwerder, he openly

huge piece of paste will take place on that side towards which it seems inclined still to extend itself; I mean, towards Turkey; whether the Greeks, regenerate and emancipated, at length repel the barbarous Mussulmen and Russians; or the French make their way through the Hellespont.

con-

congratulated him on the happiness of being the king of a nation which he could govern by laws, while he could rule his only with the knout; and he promised to bestow on it a milder government, as soon as it should be sufficiently civilised to be susceptible of it *. This time is arrived: the Russians are well worthy to be permitted by their sovereign to rise to the level of the least enslaved people in Europe. Reason and humanity would gain much, had they but a mild government; even were it still absolute, as that of Prus-

* This circumstance was related by baron Poellnitz, ear-witness of this conversation with the king. Another, which does no less honour to this great character, and which shows how much he was above the little imperial vanities of his pretended descendants, is, that, being surrounded by the Turkish army, and despairing of escape, he wrote to the senate, like a second Alexander: "Choose for my successor him who appears to you most worthy." The senate at that period was very different from that of the present day: in it was a Dolgoruky, who, like Sully, had the courage sometimes to tear the edicts of the tzar.

fia :

ſia : under this new ſystem the Ruſſians might ſtill figure a long time in hiſtory, and prepare themſelves for that grand revolution of the human mind, of which ſome think them already ſuſceptible. This can only be the laſt ſtep of civiliſation, and the return to ſimple and primitive ideas, after having revolved the immense circle of human errors and follies. Liberty and equality cannot conſtitute the happineſs of mankind, till the people ſhall be prejudiced only in favor of ſound principles of government : it is to be feared that Ruſſia is yet ages from prejudices of ſuch a nature.

Take heart, then, *ſtaroivertzi* Ruſſians (Ruſſians of the old ſtamp), who have trembled at the progreſs of the French revolution ; take heart all you, who ſtill dread its ſucceſs, and who tremble at a truth, as the guilty at a flaſh of lightning : the time is not yet come. Before you
arrive

arrive at that dreaded regeneration, you have still to pass through all the stages of civilisation. A nation must be polished before it can be informed; yours is yet in its infancy. Before it can dread democrats, demagogues, and jacobins*, it must have

* I know not what is now understood in France and Germany by this term Jacobin, which is become so dreaded and odious: but it may gratify my reader's curiosity, to inform him what it implies in Russia, where it is as fatal to him to whom it is given, as that of Jew was formerly to an unfortunate Spaniard. The present political inquisition has even more expeditious modes of proceeding, than the religious ever had.

A man, who can read and write, of whatever nation, is strongly suspected. If he be a Frenchman, he is undoubtedly a Jacobin.

Whoever reads the gazettes is a dangerous man: whoever talks of them, is a Jacobin.

He who seems to doubt that Suvarof, with fifty thousand coffacks will conquer France in one campaign—Jacobin.

He who dares say that the French are good soldiers, that they have any great generals, and that the Austrians have been sometimes beaten—Jacobin.

He,

have had royalists, aristocrats, monarchists : you have yet only slaves. Augment their

He who ventures to entertain any doubt whether Poland belongs to Russia, or whether it was allowable for the Poles to defend themselves against the Russians—Jacobin.

Every Russian gentleman, who dares to say that a man may still continue for some time a loyal subject, though he ceases to be a vile slave—Jacobin.

Every captain in the guards, and every Russian officer, who dares to murmur at his corporal's being made his commanding officer—Jacobin.

The man who imagines that the Russians should be treated like men, and no longer sold or bartered like cattle—Jacobin.

A young nobleman, whose dancing-master has not taught him to make a bow sufficiently low, and who, when he kisses the emperor's hand, and does it not as tenderly as if it were that of his mistress—Jacobin.

He whose coachman, not knowing his tzarian majesty (who to be sure is easy enough to be known), does not stop his carriage, in order to alight, and prostrate himself in the snow or in the mud—Jacobin.

In Catharine's days, he who wore a dark green coat, and large boots, was strongly suspected by the favorites. Now, the wearer of a light green coat, and half boots, is odious to Paul.

Whoever

their chains, spill their blood, drink their sweat in security ; tear the infant from its mother's breast, to compel her to suckle your puppies, that have lost theirs * : the day of retribution will not yet dawn on Russia.

Do you fear a constitution ? you have not yet laws. Do you dread a national assembly ? you have not yet a parliament, not even a divan ; for your senate is far from meriting such a name. Are your laws, your religion, contained anywhere, but in the emperor's head ? Are not your

Whoever is followed by a dog, wears a round hat, and has a waistcoat without sleeves and flaps, is arrested, and treated as a Jacobin.

This enumeration of particulars, which I could have enlarged, may appear perhaps to be an exaggeration : but it is too true, that any one of these charges might prove fatal to the man against whom it was brought, and that the ruin of several persons has been owing to causes equally ridiculous, and not more reasonable.

* An atrocity of this nature actually took place in Livonia.

fouls

souls at his disposal? Is not your meanness his greatness; and your nullity the cipher that marks his value? Take heart; your clock has not yet struck the hour of liberty.

Before that hour, terrible to you, the sun will long continue to rise on the same crimes. You will still change sovereigns before you change your government: you will still experience all the horrors of court revolutions, before you see popular ones.

In the end, however, this memorable epoch must arrive, in Russia as elsewhere. The progress of liberty is like that of time; slow, but sure; and some day will reach the north. Much has been written on the influence which climate must have on man; and a political * philosopher maintains, that it has a great deal on their

* Montesquieu.

laws and governments. With regard to secondary circumstances, I believe it; but principles are everywhere the same. Climate cannot act on the morals of a people, but from the want of law and religion, which are their primary regulators, and which may be transplanted anywhere. I know well, that a desert and uncultivated plain in Russia will spontaneously produce some plants different from those of a field left untilld in France; but if one be ploughed up like the other, and the same seed sown in both, you will reap from them the same grain. Thus the influence of climates cannot perceptibly take place, except under the zones, where the human race has physically degenerated: and besides, does not Russia include at present all the climates of Europe? What, shall the Russian, the descendant of the free and valiant Slavi, be condemned to perpetual slavery, while the Swede, still farther north, boasts his liberty? Shall Mosco, under

under the same latitude with London, be for ever a barbarian city, a stranger to arts and laws? Under what climate then did the great Novogorod flourish so early as the eighth century,—that powerful, free, and commercial city, at a time when the people, who now boast most proudly of their liberty, still crouched in ignorance beneath the feudal system*? The Slavi†, who founded that republic, seem, like the Franks, to bear their destiny and character

* Alexander Nefsky, whom the Russian monks have canonised as a saint and a hero, completed the destruction of this illustrious city by a general massacre of all its inhabitants. Far from uniting himself to the Novogorodians, who courageously threw off the yoke of the Tatars, he took upon himself the office of executioner of his own subjects to please these robbers, and destroyed the cities that refused to pay tribute to foreigners.

† *Slava*, in the Russian language, signifies glory. The word *slavoï*, or *slavnoï*, which means *the glorious*, of which foreigners have made *slavi*, *slaves*, and *Sclavonians*, is strangely disfigured. Other etymologists maintain,

rafter imprinted on their immortal names. A thousand years have not been sufficient to efface the noble impresson. All the Russians have not yet forgotten, that their fathers were more happy than themselves.

maintain, however, that all the Slavian or Sclavonian nations being known in Europe as subjugated, the appellation of *slave* was given in the west to the unfortunate beings who had lost their liberty like them, and that from these regions every species of servitude came into Europe.

CHAP. VII.

NATIONAL CHARACTER.

Of the noble, the courtier, the peasant, the artificer, and the soldier of Russia.

THE character of the Russian, it has been said, is to have no character at all, but to possess a wonderful capacity of assuming that of other nations. If this be understood of the higher class of Russians, there is much truth in the observation: but the same will equally apply to all people, who are but half polished; and even to the inhabitants of all great cities, whose physiognomies are confounded together as well as their manners, because they derive their institutions and food

from the same sources, because their blood is mixed, and their way of life is the same.

The noble Russian, the only one to be seen in foreign countries, or well known in his own, has in fact a great aptitude for adopting the opinions, manners, customs, and languages of other nations. He can be as frivolous as a quondam French *petit-mâitre*, as musically mad as an Italian, as reasonable as a German, as singular as an Englishman, as mean as a slave, and as haughty as a republican. He will change his taste and character as easily as the fashion of his dress: surely, therefore, this suppleness of mind and senses is a distinguishing feature.

This great pliability will not appear astonishing, if it be remembered, that the Russians are a new people, on whom all nations have had more or less influence.

From

From foreigners they have received arts, sciences, vices, and but few virtues. The genius of the government, and the particular character of the emperor, are imprinted on all the nation, as on one single individual; and the Greek religion, an absurd sect of christianity, has completed the alteration of its nature. It may be said of the Russian, that his government debases him, that his religion depraves him, and that his pretended civilisation has corrupted him.

Thus the primitive character of this great nation can be traced only through all these vicious institutions. A thousand years under the dominion of *Varegues*, the *Tatars*, and its own tzars, have not been able to efface it: what then must this people have been, which even now display so many excellent qualities! The Russian peasant, without property, without religion, without morals, without honor,

honor, is hospitable, humane, willing to serve, gay, faithful, and brave: the farther you penetrate into the country remote from cities, the better you find him; the most savage is always the worthiest man, the farthest from the capital is the nearest to virtue; in a word, he has all those innate qualities, which remind us of patriarchal manners; his vices are only adventitious. The remains of barbarism, still exhibited by the most enlightened part of the nation, presents a disgusting contrast. This barbarism is displayed in vulgarity of manners, an insulting contempt of mankind in general, disdain of inferiors, and servile fear of superiors, indifference for everything tending to improvement, ignorance of the forms of society, insolent pride, baseness, immodesty, want of patriotism and public spirit, but above all, the want of that honor which sometimes nearly answers the end of probity, and even of virtue. The half enlightened

lightened Russian is the most abject of men ; he crawls like the worm, which invites the foot of the oppressor to crush him.

This semi-barbarian is peculiarly fit for the trade of a courtier ; for he is equally cruel, covetous, cowardly, and cunning : but, when speaking of a Russian, we must not affix to the word courtier those ideas of urbanity, elegance of manners, and delicacy of mind, with which the courtier is embellished in other countries. In Russia, he who makes his way at court, particularly with the great, is frequently the most impudent and infamous of men, who is ready to offer his back to the king of the frogs, not lying in a marsh, but swayed by an arm as vigorous as that of Peter I. No man who thinks rightly, no young man of a noble mind or cultivated understanding, will please at court ; and if his birth or circumstances lead him thither, he

he will be in disgrace the moment he is found out.

In general the Russians are fond of acquiring information, and have a respect for strangers: such only as are totally destitute of education hate foreigners, or are jealous of them, when they come into competition with them. One thing, less to their honor, likewise distinguishes the Russians: this is a base and servile kind of politeness, which evaporates in foolish flattering compliments. Their cringing gestures, and humble and submissive countenance before their superiors, remind you of their oriental slavery. They know not how to be polite without meanness, or to flatter without falsehood: but at this we cannot wonder; for, to be truly polite, a man must be truly a man of virtue, and not act, from constraint or interest, what ought to proceed from right feeling and a due sense of decorum.

In

In Russia the higher classes may be divided into two *casts*, absolutely differing in manners and opinions. They appear as beings of different centuries; and you would scarcely suppose them to be of the same nation, though they are frequently of the same family. The one are those who reprobate all reform, instruction, and improvement: they would carry the nation back to a state of barbarism, and keep it apart from all the rest of Europe: they consider all civilisation as perversion, and deem Peter I. the corrupter, not the legislator, of his empire: they are made up of superstition, ignorance, and prejudice. The political *raskolniks* detest foreigners more than the Turks or Chinese*; but they frequently possess native morals

* Nothing can equal the rudeness with which they sometimes apostrophise foreigners. We have *bread*, they say, and you are forced to come to us, otherwise you would be starved. Wretches, too barbarous to blush at the causes of that abundance of bread, which they

morals and virtues, and the excesses of the French revolution render their system triumphant. The others, adopting the manners and customs of Europe, endeavour to keep pace with their contemporaries, and too often outdo them in corruption and absurdity. They glory in despising, or being ignorant of the ancient customs of their own country: they have sense, are sociable, and possess knowledge and talents. Among these you will find amiable men and of great merit; but for the most part they have more politeness than honesty, more depravity than information, more

they boast. Yes, a few thousands of their fellows eat wheaten bread, because thirty millions of slaves browse on herbs, and gnaw birch bark, on which they feed like the beavers, who surpass them in understanding. A few cities enjoy the pleasures of life, and exhibit palaces, because whole provinces lie desolate, or contain only wretched hovels, in which you would expect to find bears rather than men. In the caves of robbers, too, you may find abundance, and the traveller who had lost his way might experience hospitality.

vanity

vanity than pride. These are at present out of favour at court ; and the gleams of the French revolution have terrified several, who return with docility to the skirts of barbarism.

Amid all these defects, the Russian nation has remained exempt from three fatal errors, which have tainted the rest of Europe with crimes and abuses. The Russians have never established among them the false point of honor, of avenging the lie by a murder * : their history
mentions

* The Russians, as well as the Greeks and Romans, have shewn that a warrior may be brave without the madness of cutting his comrade's throat in a duel. The officer, who returns with his cane a blow you have given him with your hand, mounts to the assault the next instant as a hero. At the same time it is true, that, in a society, where the affront of a box on the ear may be wiped out by knocking a man down, and where you may spit in the face of him who insults you with his tongue, that politeness and ceremonious respect, which polished nations practise, are not to be expected :

mentions no war, no massacre, occasioned by religious fanaticism * ; and they have never considered birth as superior to merit †. Hitherto in Russia its nobles have not been esteemed in the inverse ratio of their factitious value, I mean, their antiquity : but what is there called nobility has an origin truly valuable and noble, that of liberty ; a noble signifying only a man who is free and possesses land, as already observed.

expected : accordingly, the Russian officers in general resemble a band of footmen in uniform. A Russian prince affirming something to me “ on the word of a “ man of honor,” I said to him : “ How can you “ pledge me the word of another ?” This repartee might have been addressed with propriety to most of them : but those who have education are inferior to none in point of honor and politeness.

* The persecution of the *raskolniks* by the liturgist Nikon is scarcely an exception.

† Paul is endeavouring to establish a Gothic nobility, to make out genealogical trees, and to introduce heraldry, the only science he allows to be cultivated.

Next

Next to drunkenness, the most prominent and common vice of the Russians is theft. I doubt whether any people upon earth be more inclined naturally to appropriate to themselves the property of others: from the first minister to the general officer, from the lacquey to the soldier, all are thieves, plunderers, and cheats. In Russia theft does not inspire that degrading contempt which stigmatizes a man with infamy, even among the lowest of the populace. What the thief dreads most is the being obliged to return his booty, for he reckons a caning as nothing; and if detected in the fact, he cries with a grin: *Vinavat, gosshodin! vinavat*: "I have done wrong, sir:" and returns what he had stolen, as if that were a sufficient amends. This shameful vice, pervading all classes, scarcely incurs blame. It sometimes happens, that your pocket is picked in apartments at court, to which none but persons of quality and superior officers are admitted, as if you were in a fair.

fair *. A stranger, who lodges with a Russian, even a kniaz, will find to his cost, that he must leave nothing on his dressing table or his writing desk : it is even a Russian maxim, that what is not locked up belongs to any one who will take it. The same quality has been falsely ascribed to the Spartans : but an Englishman, who has published a book on the resemblance between the Russians and Greeks, after having proved, that they eat, sing, and sleep like them, has forgotten to add, that in stealing they are still more expert.

Whence is it, that the Russians are more addicted to theft than other half polished nations ? Is it because stealing is less severely punished in Russia than else-

* The king of Sweden, after the battle of the 9th of July 1790, invited a party of Russian officers, who had been made prisoners, to dine with him. One of them stole a plate. The offended king then ordered them all to be distributed among the small towns, where they never again ate off silver.

where ?

where? No: it is owing to the immorality of the Greek sect *, the want of laws and police,

* One proof, that it is their religion particularly, which leaves, or rather gives them this quality, is, that it is not common among the people of other religions who live under the Russian government. The mussulman Tatars are of tried fidelity ; even the pagan Siberians are of exemplary good faith ; and the Livonians, Esthonians, and Fins, who are lutherans, are neither knaves nor thieves. The worship of images, however, has introduced one happy prejudice among the Russians. He who would force open a strong box without scruple, dares not break a seal. The following is a fact : Having one day given a young soldier, my servant, two rubles, for two letters, which I ordered him to carry to the post-office, I went out. On my return I discovered that my trunk had been broke open, and robbed of ten rubles in copper, which were in it : and I learned, that my soldier had been gaming with the couriers of the chancery, to whom he had lost a great deal of money. He was sought after by my orders, but in vain ; and I announced him as a deserter. Three days after he appeared, fell at my feet, and begged forgiveness, confessing, that he had stolen the ten rubles, and concealed himself in the depth of a wood, but hunger and repentance had brought him back. Instead of delivering him up as a thief and deserter, I satisfied myself with ordering a non-commissioned officer to give him twenty blows with a cane. At this order, he fell at my feet again, and begged me with tears to punish him more

police, and more especially the bad education of the nobles, who, from the cradle surrounded by slaves, imbibe from them the baseness of their own sentiments.

If you are more exposed to pilfering in Russia than in other countries, you are in less danger of being assassinated than even in England. I traversed the vacant spaces of Petersburg, and the deserts of Russia,

more severely, that nothing might lie on his conscience, he said, for having robbed his master; that he deserved a hundred blows at least, and that he would have more if I sent him to the regiment. He persisted in his entreaties to obtain this singular favour. Surprised at such a request, and moved by his penitence, I was far from granting it, but I said to him, "Now you have confessed the whole, tell me what you did with the letters, as they were of importance."—"Sir, I carried them to the post-office."—"What! would you make me believe that you did not begin with gaming away the two rubles I gave you, before you broke open my trunk?"—"Ah! sir, God forbid, that I should touch money belonging to anything sealed." In fact, after having lost ruble after ruble of the money he had stolen, he had carried the letters and the money for them to the post-office, and I received the answers in due course.

with more security than the crowded streets of London, or the well-frequented roads of France. Wherever I found a hut, I was sure of meeting hospitality at the threshold; and, if I wore a cockade in my hat, I was respected and even feared by the ill-disposed.

If stealing and drunkenness be the most prominent vices of the Russians, hospitality and courage are their most striking qualifications.

From the extreme of wretchedness some good arises, as germs from the bosom of corruption. The countries where men are slaves or savages, are thinly peopled, even if they be fertile: hence in such countries men are strangers to want, and, if allowed ever so little of their time and strength, can procure the necessaries of life in abundance. Having few wants, and their property being insecure, they

live from hand to mouth, and freely bestow what they have. A vassal readily shares his bread, his salt, and his hut with the traveller; and the noble is equally prompt to admit the stranger to partake of his table and his pleasures *. Every year the Russian or Livonian slave may set fire to a forest, and sow the virgin earth, which will return him ten or fifteen fold: this slave employs for his own use only so much of his time and produce as is absolutely necessary to prevent his dying with hunger or sinking under fatigue; all the rest is destined to augment the superfluities of his lord †. Now in Russia, where there

* In Russia parasites are not yet despised. The general, the rich merchant, every man in tolerably easy circumstances, keeps a sort of open house, so that his friends and acquaintance, officers in the army, and the crowd of young men and foreigners who have no house or home, daily find admission to his table.

† Many Russian and Livonian lords make their slaves work five days in the week: some even leave these

there are thirty thousand slaves, there are not a hundred thousand lords, who fatten on their sweat and blood ; and these alone compose the *consumers* of an immense and fertile empire. It is not surprising therefore, to see the Russian lords display a luxury and profusion, which impose upon the people, and which you would seek in vain where good and ill are more equally distributed. Many of these great lords, it must be avowed, possess laudable qualities. They are in general more inclined to enjoy what they have, than to accu-

these poor creatures only the *day of rest* to cultivate the ground that must feed their family. But I leave the task of exhibiting at large the inconceivable evils which the Russians, and more especially the wretched Livonians, suffer, to one of my friends, who is treating this subject and several others more minutely. Reckel (1) has lately roused the indignation of Germany itself, by drawing a picture of their condition. Never did the feudal system, or the black code, present such atrocities.

(1) Author of a German work, intitled *The Lettonians*.

mulate wealth: their riches are constantly renewing, like the race of men whence they flow, and frequently cost them nothing to acquire. The munificence of their tzar, and peculation of every kind, are commonly their impure sources: but they know that they may lose them as easily as they were procured; and therefore they enjoy them while it is in their power. This some of them do so nobly, that they gain credit for virtue, or at least for remorse.

The genius of the Russian people turns eagerly to commerce, for which it appears to be particularly calculated. When a peasant can obtain a passport from his master *, he hastens to quit his ungrateful

* For five and twenty rubles a year, a peasant sometimes obtains a passport, or licence, from his master, under favor of which he can exercise his ingenuity in the cities; but this tribute is increased in proportion to his industry.

fields,

fields, and apply to some trade, in hope of accumulating money enough to purchase his liberty: but in this he is frequently deceived *. The Russian tradesmen, for the most part slaves, and fettered besides by the regulations of government, can seldom rise to great speculations, in spite of all their industry: they confine themselves to inland traffic; and, instead of being merchants in their own country,

* The Russian slave, when he has contrived to make a little purse, cannot always offer it for his ransom; for his master sometimes appropriates his treasure to his own use. Many of these slaves become very rich; but their master refuses to sell them their liberty, considering their capitals, and their industry, as his property, and as a last resource for himself. There are masters, who, after they have ruined themselves by gambling, have searched the houses of their slaves, to seize on all they could find in them. This plundering is one of the reasons for which the peasants frequently bury their money, and die before they have been able to discover it to their children.

they

they are merely factors for the English, and find themselves obliged to be content, as the Jews in other countries, with the little profits of retail dealers and pedlars.

It is truly astonishing, to see how strenuously Russian politics tend to ruin the subjects of that empire. These cannot carry on trade to advantage, but in proportion to the rivalry between foreign nations, that have need of the natural productions of their country : yet the cabinet of Petersburg have shut all their ports to the competitors of England. The English are the sole purveyors of Russia, and the arbiters of the price of its produce, as well as of the value of its rubles, since they alone fix the rate of exchange. In short, they carry on this trade to the same advantage as is done with all barbarous nations, the government of which sells
exclusive

exclusive privileges to some single company *.

Mirabeau

* Whatever the people in Russia may say, the balance of trade is always against them; the natural productions of that immense empire not being sufficient to pay for the foreign articles of luxury imported into the two capitals. One ship, laden with English hardware, is equal in value to thirty laden with iron, hemp, or timber. The English carry away leather, and bring back shoes; grain, for which they return beer, &c. The only nation with which Russia could carry on an immediate exchange of produce, is France, from which it might receive oil and wine; but these Russia chooses to purchase at the third or fourth hand, and pay double the price for them.

The Russians, seeing their corn disappear, and nothing but paper left, notwithstanding the great quantity of gold and silver they draw from Siberia, suppose it is carried away by the strangers who come to their country to seek their fortunes, follow arts or trades, or serve in the army. This, however, is a great mistake. Soldiers, or men of letters, seldom grow rich; and in Russia less than anywhere: the artist and the mechanic, too, more frequently meet poverty than wealth; and most of these strangers die or settle in the country. All who arrive bring at least a few ducats with them; and there is not one in twenty who goes away with any property:

Mirabeau has said, that the Russians are the most malleable of all people. A young peasant, rough, savage, timid, torn from his hamlet, is metamorphosed into an elegant and adroit footman, or a spruce and courageous soldier, in less than a month. His master makes him in a short time his tailor, his musician, or even his surgeon, or counsellor at law.

I had been told a hundred times, that the best way to teach them anything was by blows. I could not believe it; but I saw it was so. When a few hundred recruits are delivered to an officer to form a new battalion, the cloth and leather necessary for equipping them are given him at the same time. Having drawn the

property: if a calculation were made, the balance with respect to these would be in favor of Russia. For a long time none but musicians, milliners, pawnbrokers, and Englishmen, have enriched themselves in Russia.

poor

poor fellows up in a rank, he says to one, "You shall be tailor to the company;" to another, "You shall be shoemaker;" to a third, "You shall be musician." If they grumble, they receive some strokes with the cane, and a few bad implements are given them, to go and practise at their respective employments. The caning is repeated occasionally, till they produce a boot or garment tolerably well made, and can play the march of the regiment. "But," said I to a colonel, who boasted of having thus formed the Mosco grenadiers, "among those men there must have been several who had exercised in their own villages the trades you wanted: why, instead of choosing them yourself, did you not interrogate them on this head? he who could play on the *balaleika* * would have made a good

* A sort of lute with two strings, on which the Russian peasants play.

"fifer;

“fifer; and he would have been the best
“shoemaker, who had learned of himself
“to make *lappis* *.”—“O,” replied he,
“you are a stranger; you know nothing
“of our Russians: among all those fel-
“lows, there was not one who would
“have confessed what he could do.”
Strange and melancholy truth! but it is
not so with the Russian alone; it is the
same with the slave of every country; and
always will be, where a man is obliged to
exert his corporal and mental faculties by
compulsion.

This spirit of mechanical obedience im-
posed on the Russians, has an unfortunate
influence on all their imitative arts. They
have a national music of their own inven-
tion, which is extraordinary, and bears
the characteristic stamp of their enslaved
genius: it appears formed to be executed

* Shoes of linden bark, which the Russians wear.

by a machine, rather than by men. About half a hundred musicians, as they are called, have each a horn, differing in size in regular gradation, like the pipes of an organ: each of these horns gives but one tone, and each of the players has before him only one note, the greater or less length of which, and the longer or shorter intervals between its repetitions, form all the variation. Thus these musicians, each repeating his own note, perform by common accord the simplest and even the most complicated airs. The bulk of these horns, and the purity and depth of their tones, render their concert sublime; and its effect is particularly grand by night, and in the open fields. I doubt the possibility, however, of forming a band for this strange music anywhere but in Russia; as it would not be easy to muster fifty men, who would consent to dedicate their lives to the sole purpose of sounding one note on a horn, and wait whole hours.

hours measuring rests, in expectation of the moment for sounding this note, incapable of being moved by the air they are employed in playing, or by the art they profess. Nothing but an automaton, an organ-pipe, or a slave, can be brought to this exactness. The Greeks and Romans had slaves likewise, but they had liberal arts: in Russia there are none; all the arts there are servile or foreign, and can be naturalized only with freedom.

Whether he exercise arts, guide the life-supporting plough, or handle the destructive musket, the Russian is fettered, and trembles under the lash of a master: all the qualities of his mind are withered, and the tenderest feelings of his heart are outraged *. How astonishing is it, that, with

* What has disgusted me is, to see men with grey hair, and patriarchal beards, lying on their faces, with their breeches down, while they were flogged like children.

with these debased beings, torn by force from their families as a sheep from the fold, and of whom the greater part die of grief and terrors before they reach the army, to which they are driven by the cane, Russia should have gained so many victories over her neighbours? Reasons for such apparent contradiction, however, may be assigned. The Russian, who can support the wretched life necessary to complete the education of a soldier, may be considered as an invulnerable, or at

children. Still more horrible! I blush to write it; there are masters, who sometimes force the son to inflict this punishment on his father: and, most abominable of all, there are sons who comply with such an insult. These and many other horrid actions are committed chiefly in the country, where the lords, in their castles, exercise the same authority over men as over animals. Even women are subjected to the most indelicate insults. These barbarities, however, become more rare, and inspire the better kind of Russians with as much horror as they do my readers: but they are still committed, and attest to what a pitch of degradation the human species may be reduced.

least

least insensible being, immersed in the waters of the Styx. Scarcely one in three endures the trial, but he who does remains indefatigable, and hard as the iron that has repeatedly passed under the hammer. From the proud Russian prince, who would devour a raw turnip or cucumber, after having gormandized on the most exquisite dishes at a sumptuous table *, to the filthy Siberian, who feeds on stinking fish, all the Russians seem to have iron constitutions, capable of supporting equally the extremes of heat and cold, of gluttony and abstinence. The veteran soldiers are the hardest of men. Reeking from the vapour bath, they roll themselves naked in the snow, and sleep on a bed of ice. From the severest toil they pass to the most in-

* Potemkin has often been seen to present himself in the midst of his courtiers with his legs bare, and his hair about his ears, eating a raw carrot or turnip, when just come from the empress's table.

dolent

dolent repose ; after the longest and most rigid abstinence they gorge themselves with food with impunity ; and with a *soukare* (biscuit) and an onion in their pocket, they will travel sixty versts a day, to follow Suvarof.

Lassant la faim, la soif, et la fatigue,
Le soldat Russe affronte les revers,
Brave la mort, et franchit les deserts:
Fris et soumis, de soi-même prodigue,
Guider son bras, il détruit l'univers.

“ The Russian—hunger, thirst, fatigue subdued,

“ His foe across each desert wild pursues,

“ Dares adverse fortune, dares impending fate,

“ And prodigal of life is bravely great.

“ Humble, yet proud, his banners wide unfurl'd,

“ Guide but his arm, he'll subjugate the world.”

In short, if, as it has long been imagined, to be a good soldier require nothing more than to be a very exact machine, the Russian must certainly be the best in the world. His valour is so mechanical and so docile *, that he dreads the

* The Russian soldier sometimes gives very laughable proofs of this mechanical exactness. Peter I. had
issued

the cane of his officer more than the cannon of the enemy : it may be said of him, that he is afraid to be a coward. Contrary to what is seen in many other nations, the Russian soldier is more intrepid than his officer. He has powerful incentives in his ferocious disposition,—love of plunder, and desperation. The officer wants these, and is often destitute of that sense of honor, courage, and patriotism.

issued orders, that every man who went through the streets without a lantern after ten o'clock at night, should be stopped. A physician, returning from a visit to a patient, was preceded by his servant with a lantern. The servant was suffered to pass, but the physician, notwithstanding all he could say, was conducted by the sentry to the guard-house. In a battle with the Swedes, a galley was sunk, on board of which were several officers of the guards. The commander of the next galley cried out to his men : " Save the officers of the " guards." One poor fellow sinking held up his arm for assistance, and a soldier caught hold of it ; but before he would pull him out, he asked, " Are you an officer " of the guards ?" The poor fellow being unable to answer, the soldier let him go, and he perished.

Catharine

Catharine substituted for these a bait of various recompenses, of which she was prodigal on all occasions. Every officer present at an engagement* was promoted a step: they, who were mentioned with honor by the general in his report, received crosses, or gold-hilted swords; and they who were wounded, peasants or pensions. I have seen officers, who, in one campaign had received two crosses, a gold-hilted sword, and two promotions. There is a wide difference, however, between the valor of these soldiers and that of those warriors, whose heroic exploits

* The soldiers received a silver medal, and I have seen whole regiments, where none but the recruits just arrived were without them. The medal distributed to those who were present at the expedition against Tschesme, or Clazomene, where the Turkish fleet was burned, has great sublimity in the inscription: *Bouil*, "I was there." Paul recompenses his soldiers by giving permission to a regiment, with whose services he is satisfied, to use *the grenadier's march*.

were rewarded by a branch of oak, or the simple approbation of their country.

The Russian soldier has retained some virtues, of which he frequently exhibits proofs amid the excesses in which he too often indulges; for, notwithstanding the dread and horror which the peasant feels for the life of a soldier, young men have been seen to cast themselves at the feet of the recruiting officers, and beg that they might be taken instead of a brother, about to be torn from his family *. The greatness

* I was much interested for a young man, who had come five hundred miles, to beg that he might be received into the regiment instead of his brother, who had a large family; and I spoke of it to the minister at war, relating the particulars of a sacrifice, which in my opinion deserved to be rewarded by setting the soldier at liberty, without detaining his generous brother. A relation of the minister, who was present, said, "We must dismiss all our soldiers, then; for I have seen such things as would astonish you a thousand times."

This

greatness of such a sacrifice can only be properly estimated when we recollect that a Russian foldier is enlisted not for a certain number of years, but for his whole life. Once dragged from his hut, and all that are dear to him, he must grow old under the severest discipline, if he do not fall by the sword of the enemy. If he be married, scarcely will he have quitted his wife before his master may give her another *; and if he have children, he will
never

This silenced me, not knowing which to admire most, the natural goodness of the Russian slaves, or the hard-heartedness of their lords. This man had been taken by Pugatshef, tied up in a bag, and was on the point of being thrown into the river, when a Russian party delivered him.

* This is forbidden; but it is frequently done, that the master's income may not be diminished: for he would be obliged to support the wife and children; but by marrying her again, the same fields are cultivated by the husband's successor, who pays the same tribute. Frequently a lord marries a stout girl of twenty to a boy of ten or twelve, in order to establish a fresh
household.

never behold them again *. He is lost, dead to his family for ever.

You then see him giving proofs of courage and confidence in his generals, which serve him instead of patriotism † :
so

household. Sometimes a father of a numerous young family, finding his task too severe, solicits a stout wife for one of his boys, and supplies the place of a husband to his daughter-in-law, till the child is grown up. Such disorderly conduct is very common in the country.

* The soldier never obtains a furlough.

† At the siege of Otchakof, a piquet guard, going to an advanced post, met an officer in the trenches, who said to them : " The Turks have made a sally ; the post, to which you are going, is already in their hands ; turn back, or you will be cut to pieces."—" What is that to us ?" answered one of the soldiers ; " prince Dolgoruky is answerable for us." Notwithstanding the officer's representations, they went on, and returned no more.

At the attack which the Turks made upon Kimburg, Suvarof went out drunk, at the head of his garrison,

so the well-trained dog displays from obedience the same courage, as the generous lion defending his life or liberty. In his bravery, native hilarity, gait, and cleanliness, the Russian soldier is admirable. There are regiments, which, for these sixty years, have been almost always in fight of the enemy. These continual combats have rendered the Russians warlike; but the scenes at Otchakof, Ismail, and Prague, and the devastations in unhappy Poland, have stamped their valour with the most ferocious barbarity. Yet

rison, to repulse the enemy. The Russians gave way at the first charge, and several took to their heels. A soldier, enraged, stopped the fugitives with his bayonet, obliged them to turn back, and charged at their head, as if he had been their officer. Catharine, being informed of this action, which was the cause of the first victory in the last war, would have given him a commission: but this he refused, saying that he could neither read nor write, and would rather be a good soldier than a bad officer. The empress then sent him a gold medal, and conferred on him a pension of three hundred rubles [30*l.*].

this

this was the character of the generals that commanded them, of Catharine who excited them, rather than their own. Yet amid that horde of savages which she let loose upon that wretched nation, by the side of the Suvarofs, Denisofs, Karkoffkies, and Kretschetnikofs, whose names are even less barbarous than their characters, might be seen the Repnins, Gallitzins, Buchshefdens, Fersens, the young Tolstoi, and several superior officers, whose humanity and even urbanity formed a complete contrast to the barbarity of their companions. The Russians, who became so ferocious under the reign of Catharine, were much less so under that of the mild Elizabeth. Their memory is still respected in Prussia; the conduct and discipline which they observed there during two years, were acknowledged with gratitude by the inhabitants. The irregular Cossacs, the Bashkirs, the Kirghises, and the Calmucs, who compose
their

their light troops, are the only barbarians without discipline.

The genius of Catharine required a nation so new, so malleable, and of which she might say, as the statuary in La Fontaine says of his block of marble: "Shall I make of it a god, or a table?" Of the Russian she could not make a god, but she might have made a man: her greatest crime is the not having placed her glory in doing this*. By submitting to the reign

* Catharine, the disciple and idol of our philosophers, the legislatress of the north, has riveted the chains of the unhappy Russians. By what fatality is it, that she, who in her youth was not afraid to have the question discussed, whether it would not be proper to emancipate the peasants, should finish by reducing to similar slavery those provinces which had retained some franchises? Wiasemsky, whom Momonof punningly called *Volterre* (the land stealer), with a single stroke of the pen reduced the Cossacs, Tatars, and Fins to the state of slaves, in order to augment the capitation; notwithstanding Catharine had acknowledged and guaranteed their rights! This Wiasemsky, whose knavery

reign of Catharine and her twelve favorites, Russia proved itself the most debased of nations.

Peter I. having employed a monk to translate Puffendorf's Political History of Europe into Russian, the monk, from a sentiment of mean and false delicacy, softened all the expressions he found relating to slavery and Russia: he even took the liberty to omit the chapter treating of the national character of the Muscovites altogether. Peter, turning over the book, presently discovered it, gave the monk a severe reprimand, and ordered him immediately to correct the whole of the translation, and render it perfectly

knavery was equal to the stupidity of his successor, was attorney-general and treasurer of the empire; and, according to the Russian expression, was *the sovereign's eye*. Count Panin, speaking of him, said to Catharine: "You have a purblind eye there:" to which she answered: "For that reason I will have the senate obey it."

faithful

faithful. This noble frankness demands our esteem : but what will the reader say, when he is informed, that, under the reign of Catharine, a new translation of Puffendorf appeared, with all those omissions which the monk had formerly made ?

Russia, brave, powerful, amiable, and hospitable nation ! where I found friends and protectors, forgive the frankness of a stranger, who ventures to depict you as you appeared to him ; and who, if he had been speaking of his own countrymen, could not always have spoken of them with praise. In painting your good qualities, I have displayed your heart : in painting your vices, I have shewn only the marks of your chains. May freedom efface them at some future day !

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 our esteem: but what will the reader say,
 when he is informed, that under the
 reign of Catherine, a new translation of
 Buffon's appeared, with all those civil-
 ized which the work had formerly made?

Russia, brave, powerful, amiable, and
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 stranger, who ventures to depict you as
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 painting your vices, I have shown only
 the marks of your chains. May freedom

collect them at some future day.

CHAP. VIII.

RELIGION.

*The Greek church—Priests—Festivals—
Fasts—Images.*

IT has often been made matter of reproach to religion, that her most zealous defenders are not always the best of men in their own characters—It is to be lamented that Russia in particular affords matter to support this sarcasm. There, a most illiterate or most degenerate sect, under the name of christians, relies on abstract points of doctrine instead of morals, miracles instead of reason, the performance of ceremonies instead of the practice

practice of virtue, and purchasing expiation for crimes instead of repentance or punishment. There, the devotee is assuredly a knave, and the hypocrite a villain. I have already asserted, that the principal cause of the vices of the people is the immorality of their religion ; and he who considers, that in the Russian Greek church there are neither sermons, nor exhortations, nor catechism, will at once see the rectitude of my opinion. A sort of auricular confession, but very different from that of the catholics, is the only act which reminds the Russian of a few of his duties : but all the confessor enjoins him consists in fasting, repetition of litanies, and making the sign of the cross. The archbishop or metropolitan, indeed, sometimes preaches a sermon in the chapel belonging to the palace : but this sermon used to be nothing more than an oration to flatter Catharine, who heard it with downcast eyes, and kissed her hand

hand to the preacher by way of acknowledgment. It is true, likewise, that Plato, archbishop of Mosco, who is really a man of merit, has composed some very sensible and eloquent homilies; and that he has enjoined the parish priests to make similar ones, or at least to read his on Sundays and festivals. But these country popes are not always capable even of doing the latter; the rest are still less equal to the former; and they who are able are negligent.

Beside the fifty-two Sundays in the year, the Russians celebrate sixty-three festivals, twenty-five of which were dedicated to Catharine and her family*.

At

* Five of these festivals were exclusively in honor of Catharine: 1st, her birth-day, the 21st of April, old style; 2dly, her accession to the throne, the 28th of June; 3dly, her coronation, the 22d of September; 4thly, her inoculation for the small-pox, the 21st of November;

At court these were days of *Te Deum*, or rather *Te Deam*, pomp, balls, distribution of favors, and feasting: in the towns, of drunkenness and disorder. In the country they might have been days of rest for the wretched; but if their masters did not send them to their usual tasks after mass, they dedicated those moments to the hasty gathering in of their own harvest: in this respect, however, the festivals were a benefit to them.

The most despicable and most despised of all persons in Russia are the priests. Many of them cannot even read; yet they are more despicable for their drunk-

November; and 5thly, her name-day, the 24th of the same month. For these solemn days each of her generals were anxious to send her the news of some important victory, which she preferred to any other homage. It was necessary for the enemies of the Russians to be particularly on their guard some days preceding these festivals, for they were sure to be attacked.

ness

ennefs and intemperance than for their grofs ignorance. There are feminaries for their tuition, indeed; but it is not always neceffary for a man to have been educated in them, in order to become a prieft. A father bequeaths to his fon his living, his church, and his flock: for this he wants nothing but the confent of his lord, who eafily obtains that of the bifhop. If the fon be able, as his father was before him, to read a little in the Sclavonian language, fay mafs, and chaunt vespers, he is mafter of his trade, and follows it. He often gets drunk, and fights with his parifhioners; who notwithstanding kifs his hand, and ask his bleffing, after they have given him a drubbing *. It is not uncom-

* On certain days in the year thefe popes make the tour of their parifhes, demanding from hut to hut eggs, butter, flax, fowls, &c. On their return you might fee them either lying dead drunk on the bottom of the cart among their ftore, or merrily fing as they drove it along.

mon in the streets of Mosco and Petersburg, to meet drunken priests and monks, reeling along, swearing, singing, and insulting the passengers, male and female. One of the chief causes of the vices and ignorance of these Russian priests, however, is to be ascribed to the prohibition they are under to read any book except their breviary, to employ themselves in any occupation, to do any work, or to play on any instrument of music.

The indecency with which these priests officiate, render the ceremonies extremely ridiculous, which would be much less so in themselves *.

Many

* A Russian general, having a child of one of his domestics baptized in his antichamber, conducted thither the company who had dined with him to amuse them with the sight. The priest having officiated with an ease and dignity which were not expected, the general applauded his performance by clapping, and crying,
" Bravo !

Many lords have private chaplains in their own houses, to say mass: but they commonly live with the footmen, and are not admitted to their master's table. The condition of these priests, however, is free *.

“Bravo! Bravo!” These Russian baptisms by immersion are always extremely indelicate when the person is a Turk or a Calmuc of five and twenty. Their marriages, too, have many ridiculous ceremonies. I saw a lady, at the marriage of her waiting woman in her own private chapel, smartly scold her chaplain for not knowing these ceremonies, and take the direction and ordering of them upon herself. The bride on this occasion was an English woman, and a clergyman of her own nation gave her away. His grave deportment formed a singular contrast to that of the officiating pope.

* During the war with Sweden, as there was a pressing want of men, several thousands of priests' sons were notwithstanding taken away, and some battalions of artillery formed of them. Several of them had already commenced their sacerdotal functions: yet they were dragged, like slaves, from their altars and their wives, to go and learn the management of great guns in general Melissino's camp.

The superior clergy are more respectable, and certainly much more respected. Nothing can be more pompous than a solemn mass celebrated by an archbishop, who is arrayed in his robes by his clergy in the midst of the temple, as the grand priest formerly when sacrificing in the temple of the gods *. Plato and Gabriel, arch-

* M. D'Artois, during his stay at Petersburg, happened to be at such a ceremony, when Catharine sent an officer to him with the news that Dumourier had been defeated at Nerwinden. The Russians imagined that it was his devotion to their St. Alexander which had procured him such a happy message, and the prince was willing to pay the archbishop a compliment on the occasion; but he very unpolitely answered, that he had prayed only for true believers. Perhaps the reader will be surprised to hear that Catharine, who so much ridiculed the consecrated sword which the pope sent to the Austrian general Daun, herself ordered a sword to receive the benediction of the metropolitan of St. Alexander Nefsky, to make a present of it to M. D'Artois. Its hilt was of gold, ornamented with brilliants, and on the guard were these words: "God and the king:" it has not performed more miracles, however, than marshal Daun's.

bishops

bishops of Mosco and Petersburg, are men venerable for their character and conduct, and particularly for the pains they have taken to reform the manners of their brethren. M. Sambursky, chaplain to the grand-dukes, is a man who does honor to his cloth and country. He is the only Russian priest to be seen without a beard. When he was in London, he obtained permission, though with difficulty, to shave himself; and he has had the courage to persevere in the practice since his return. But if he left his beard in England, he brought thence taste and knowledge, from which his country may reap advantage. He applies himself to the improvement of agriculture in the environs of Tzariskofelo, where he has cleared deserts and drained marshes, to form fertile fields or English gardens *. This is the only vengeance

* Those of the grand-duke Alexander, of which he formed the plan, and was not unfrequently its execu-

geance he takes on his more bigoted brethren, for their contempt of one whom they consider as a heretic. He has obtained another dispensation equally extraordinary. His wife being dead, he is permitted to continue in the exercise of his clerical functions as a widower, which is contrary to the rules of the Greek hierarchy. According to these, a man cannot act as a parish priest without being married: and, as a priest can marry but

tor, were founded on a very ingenious thought. Catharine had written a tale for her grand-children, intitled, *The Tzarovitch Chlore*. The little Chlore undertakes a journey, to reach the top of a mountain, where blows a rose without a thorn, and gathers it after a thousand dangers and a thousand toils. M. Sambursky has exhibited all the scenes and adventures of this tale in the field of nature. The centre of the garden is a mountain, on the summit of which stands the temple of the rose without thorns, and the path that leads to it presents all the instructive allegories which Catharine had invented for the young princes. An adopted son of the worthy Sambursky has written a description of these gardens in verse, which the author of the present work has translated into French.

once,

once, if he lose his wife he must shut himself up in a convent. For this reason the wives of the priests are the most tenderly treated, and the happiest women in Russia.

Is it to ignorance, one of the characteristics of the Russian clergy, that we are to look for the causes of the happy exception their church offers in the annals of christianity? Their disputes and mistaken zeal have not, as elsewhere, occasioned wars, massacres, and persecutions. If we except the violent acts of Peter I. to reform their beards and long garments; and those of Nikon, to establish his new liturgy; the Russian history exhibits none of those religious contests which have deluged the earth with blood. Archbishop Nikon was no doubt right in endeavouring to render the form of worship more pure and simple; but he was wrong in exhorting the tzar Alexis to employ violence. They who would not make the
sign

sign of the cross with three fingers, had their hand cut off: hence arose a schism. These schismatics would not admit either the translation of the sacred books by Nikon, or his new litanies; and even now they would rather lose their hand, than not make the sign of the cross with two fingers, as a symbol that the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Father alone. These are called by others *raskolnikis* *, but they style themselves *staroi-vertsi* (old believers). They were prohibited from celebrating worship in public, but they held private meetings, and under prince Potemkin they obtained permission to build themselves several churches. His plan was, to gain the support of this powerful and fanatic sect at some future period. There are some wealthy merchants and great lords who are attached to it, and it is widely diffused among the peasants.

* Schismatics.

However,

However, the *raskolnikis* are no longer persecuted, and the Russians in general display the greatest indifference about the faith of others.

The common people observe with the most scrupulous exactness the four grand lents which are enjoined them. Their superstition carries them so far, that they abstain even from their wives or their snuff-boxes. The conscience of a Russian would not be so much affected by a theft or a murder, from which he might obtain absolution, as by having eaten meat, milk, or an egg, during Lent. Linseed oil, fish, herbs, roots, and mushrooms, are then his sole nourishment; and such an abstinence for six weeks reduces him to a skeleton. The rich have sumptuous tables, well provided with fish and exquisite fruits; and on some of them even flesh is served for strangers or the sick: but I have seen a devotee refuse to touch

4 his,

his fish-soup, because he was helped with a spoon that had been in soup-gras. These rigid fasts made some one say, that the Russians knew not how to take heaven but by famine.

Every Russian, beside the consecrated amulet he wears about his neck, which he receives at his baptism, and which he never after lays aside, commonly carries in his pocket a figure of St. Nicholas, or some other patron saint, stamped on copper. This he carries with him everywhere as devoutly as Eneas did his lares and penates. It is frequently the only thing that a peasant, or a soldier on his march, has about him: nothing can be more common than to see him occasionally take this figure out of his pocket, spit upon it, and rub it with his hand to clean it; then place it opposite to him, and on a sudden prostrate himself, making the sign of the cross a thousand times,
fetch

fetch a thousand sighs, and recite his *forty *gospodi pomiloï!* “ Lord have mercy “ upon me !” Having finished his prayer, he shuts his box, and returns the figure into his pocket.

A Russian nobleman is a little more ceremonious. He also has an image attending him on his journies, but this is dressed in gold or silver ; and when he arrives at a place where he means to stop, the first business of his servant is to take the image from its case, and place it in his master's room, before which he immediately prostrates himself.

I knew a Russian princess who had always a large silver crucifix following her in a separate carriage, and which she usually placed in her bedchamber. When

* The number forty has something sacred in it among the Russian clergy.

any-

anything fortunate had happened to her in the course of the day, and she was satisfied with her admirers, she had lighted candles placed about the crucifix, and said to it, in a familiar style: "See, " now, as you have been very good to-day, " you shall be treated well; you shall have " candles all night; I will love you, I " will pray to you." If, on the contrary, anything occurred to vex this lady, she had the candles put out, forbid her servants to pay any homage to the poor image, and loaded it with reproaches and revilings.

Even Catharine affected to have great devotion towards images. She was frequently seen to prostrate herself before the door of her chapel, take up the dust from the ground, and scatter it over the diamond crown on her head. Once an image of the virgin, covered with diamonds, of which the empress Elizabeth had

had made her a present at her confirmation, and which she had placed in this chapel, was stolen away. All the officers of the police were set in motion to discover the perpetrator of so daring a theft, but in vain. "Ah!" said Catharine, "it is not the loss of the diamonds, but of the holy image, I regret: I would give double its value to recover it." Her prayers were heard: after great search had been made, and several persons had been imprisoned, the image was found in the course of a few days, stripped of all its valuable ornaments, in the snow near the admiralty. Catharine, delighted at her good fortune, rewarded him who brought it, directed the image to be arrayed more richly than before, and replaced with great ceremony on her altar.

The girls of the town, too, in Russia, are very devout. When they have a visitor,

fitor, before they grant him any favors, they always veil their images, and extinguish the candles placed before them.

I shall not particularise all the superstitions with which such a religion, if it deserves that name, must necessarily inspire an ignorant and enslaved people. It seems the present policy to thicken the cloud of errors, which the genius of Peter, the humanity of Elizabeth, and the philosophy of Catharine fought in some degree to attenuate*. While we pity

* Perhaps it will be matter of astonishment to the reader, to peruse the following article, translated from the imperial gazette of Petersburg :

“ Petersburg, 17 December 1798.

“ In 1796 a coffin was found at the convent of
 “ Sumorin, in the city of Trotma, in the eparchy
 “ of Vologda, containing a corpse in the habit of a
 “ monk. It had been interred in 1568, yet was in a state
 “ of perfect preservation, as were also the garments.
 “ From the letters embroidered on these, it was found
 “ to be the body of the most venerable Feodose Su-
 “ morin,

pity the state of degradation under which a great people crouches, we should do justice to the enlightened Russians, by whom it is lamented: but they are enchained by prejudices, as the giant Gulliver

“ morin, founder and superior of the convent, and
 “ who had been acknowledged as a saint during his
 “ life for the miracles he had performed.”

It is then stated, that the directing synod had made a very humble report on this occasion to his imperial majesty: after which follows the Emperor's ukase.

“ We Paul, &c. having been certified, by a special
 “ report of the most holy synod, of the discovery that
 “ has been made in the convent of Spasso-Sumorin,
 “ of the miraculous remains of the most venerable
 “ Feodose; which miraculous remains distinguish
 “ themselves by the happy cure of all those who have
 “ recourse to them with entire confidence; we take the
 “ discovery of these holy remains as a visible sign that
 “ the Lord has cast his most gracious eye, in the
 “ most distinguished manner, on our reign: For this
 “ reason we offer our fervent prayers, and our grati-
 “ tude, to the Supreme Dispenser of all things, and
 “ charge our most holy synod to announce this me-
 “ morable discovery throughout all our empire, ac-
 “ cording to the forms prescribed by the holy church,
 “ and

ver by the Lilliputians; his bonds were weak and imperceptible, as his enemies were minute, but every one of his hairs was separately fastened to the ground, and he was unable to raise his head.

“and by the holy fathers, &c. The 28th of September 1798.”

Paul has enriched the Russian calendar with a few festivals, in addition to those already mentioned: among others, those of the disinterested saint, and of the Madonna of Kasan, which he has ordered to be kept holy. Every child, too, that he has, gives rise to two new festivals, his birth-day and his name-day: and Paul has nine children already!

CHAP. IX.

ON FEMALE GOVERNMENT.

*Its influence on the women of Russia.
Their character—immodesty—manners—
baths—talents—charms.—The Princess
Dashkof.*

RUSSIA offers an example truly singular in the annals of history. The same century has seen five or six women reign* despotically over an empire, where the women were before slaves to men who were themselves enslaved; where Peter I. was obliged to employ† force to

* Sophia, sister to Peter I. Catharine I. Anne I. the regent Anne, Elizabeth, and Catharine II.

† Before Peter I. women did not appear at court or in company, or even at their husband's tables.

Peter

to raise them out of this barbarous state of debasement, and give them a place in society; where even now the code of slavery does not allow them a soul*, or count them among human creatures. The reigns of these females afford a strong argument in favor of those nations, who have never suffered the sceptre to be placed in hands that were formed for the distaff; for it would be difficult to find six reigns more prolific in wars, revolutions, crimes, disorders, and cala-

Peter issued an ukase directing husbands to let their wives appear in public, very wisely deeming the society of women necessary to civilise the nation: but he was often obliged to employ the officers of the police to conduct the ladies to the balls.

* In the Russian language the word *soul* is employed to designate male slaves. Instead of asking a man how much he has a year, the question is, how many souls he has: and a man has frequently ten or twenty thousand, without reckoning those of the women or his own, which certainly some may think least deserves to be taken into the account.

mities

mities of every kind. That the manners of the court were softened, I am ready to allow ; but then they were corrupted ; and wretchedness increased in equal proportion with luxury and disorder. Abuses of every kind, tyranny, and licentiousness, became the very essence of government.

The old proverb, “ when women hold “ the sceptre, men guide it,” is false, or unmeaning. When women reign, their lovers tyrannize over the people, and all in power plunder them. But, without entering into the political effects of petticoat government, which may well be considered as the extreme of baseness or extravagance in mankind *, I shall notice only

* From what contradiction have the offices of empress, and of queen, which require vigor both of mind and body, and knowledge or talents of every kind, been so frequently given to women? An army of five hundred thousand men were at the disposal of

only the influence it has had on society and the female sex in Russia.

The existence of the Amazons appeared to me no longer a fable, after I had seen the Russian women. Had the succession of empresses continued, we might perhaps have seen that nation of female warriors locally reproduced, and in the same clime where they formerly flourished *. Great energy is still observable

Catharine, yet she would not entrust another woman with a single company ! She directed the politics of Europe, and gave it peace or war ; though a woman could not enjoy the most trifling office in it ! Is there not great inconsistency in this conduct ?

* It is singular enough, that in the same countries which were said to have been inhabited by a society of women, who proscribed all men, a society of *Zaporogue* Cossacs has since dwelt, who would not suffer a single woman among them, recruiting their force solely by carrying away youths from the neighbouring lands. This barbarous republic was destroyed by Potemkin, and they who composed it distributed in the different armies, or among the other Cossacs.

in

in the women of the Slavonian nations, of which their history furnishes many proofs. That feminine activity, which love, tenderness, and domestic cares absorb in other countries, the women of the north, who are born with more cold and robust constitutions, employ in search of sway and in political intrigue. They frequently experience a physical necessity of inspiring love, but their hearts seldom feel a want of returning it.

Under the reign of Catharine the women had assumed a pre-eminence at court, which they carried with them into society, and into their own houses. The princess Dashkof, that "Tomyris talking French," masculine in her tastes, her gait, and her exploits, was still more so in her titles and functions of *director* of the academy of sciences, and *president* of the Russian academy. It is well known that she long solicited Catharine to appoint

her colonel of the guards ; a post in which she would undoubtedly have acquitted herself better than most of those by whom it was held. Catharine, however, had too much distrust of one who boasted that she had seated her on the throne, to confide such a place to her hands. One more female reign, and we might have seen a woman general of an army, or minister of state.

Many Russian generals, who enjoyed some reputation in foreign countries, were at that period governed by their wives. Count V. Poushkin, who commanded in Finland, durst not make a movement till he had dispatched a courier to his, to consult her. Count Ivan Soltikof was as inferior to his wife in moral qualifications as in physical strength, and the minister at war trembled before the wrath of his better half. The reader must not suppose that this submission, which became almost
general,

general, was that gallant and chivalrous deference which has sometimes been paid to the ladies: those whom I have cited as examples were old, ugly, and ill tempered: it was literally the submission of weakness to strength, of cowardice to courage, of imbecility to understanding. All the sex seemed to participate in the respect and fear which were paid to Catharine by her courtiers.

The same effects were frequently perceived at a distance from the court. The wives of several colonels received the reports of the regiment, gave orders to the officers, employed them in particular services, dismissed them, and sometimes appointed them. Mrs. Mellin, *coloneless* of the regiment of Tobolsk, commanded it with a truly martial haughtiness, received the reports at her toilette, and regulated the mounting guard at Narva, while her
good-

good-natured husband was employed elsewhere.

On the Swedes attempting to surprise the place, she came out of the tent in regimentals, and marched against the enemy at the head of a battalion. Several women accompanied the army against the Turks. Potemkin's seraglio was always composed of handsome Amazons, who delighted in visiting the fields of battle, and admiring the handsome corpses of the Turks, as they lay stretched on their backs, their scymetars in their hands, and with an air of defiance still in their countenances, as the Argant of Tasso appeared to the gentle Herminia *.

* After the assault of Otchakof, heaps of dead bodies were piled up on the Liman, then frozen over, and remained there till the thaw. Round these pyramids the Russian ladies used to take the air in their sledges, to make their observations.

The

The masculineness of the women is still more observable in the country. Something of this character no doubt may be remarked in all countries, where the men are slaves: for here widows, or daughters come of age, are often obliged to take on themselves the government of their estates, the people of which are their wealth, and are considered as their property, like so many cattle. In this case they are engaged in businesses by no means suitable to their sex. To buy, sell, and exchange slaves, assign them their tasks, and order them to be stripped and flogged in their presence, would be as repugnant to the feelings as to the modesty of a woman in a country where men are not degraded to the level of domestic animals, and treated with the same indifference * ;
but

* A French woman from St. Domingo informed me, that several Creolian ladies were not more scrupulous than those of Russia. Some of them go themselves

but these are offices which the Russian women are often obliged to perform, and not unfrequently they perform them with pleasure.

The habit of treating men thus, and that which both sexes have of mixing together in their public baths, deaden, at a very early age, that modesty which is natural to women, and I have seen some as bold as the most impudent men *.

This effrontery in some Russian women must not be ascribed to libertinism, or selves on board the slave ships, to select and purchase slaves, who are exhibited to them quite naked. A well made negro of twenty-five is called *un nègre toutes pièces*, “ a negro at all points.”

* Being once at the house of a lady in the country, she was desirous of amusing herself with fishing. She sent for nets, and ordered some of her servants to strip and go into the water. They immediately stripped themselves in the presence of their mistress, and she gave them directions in their fishing with all the unconcern imaginable.

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gross licentiousness. They live from their childhood in the greatest familiarity with a herd of their slaves: a thousand private and even secret services are performed for them by male slaves, whom they scarcely consider as men. Their domestic manners afford them daily opportunities of satisfying, and even anticipating, their curiosity respecting all the mysteries of nature, and stifling in the birth the irritability of their nerves. Only an equal can put them to the blush; to them a slave is not a being of the same species.

I have already mentioned the revolting manner in which men are treated in Russia. A man's sensibility must be deadened, and his heart already hardened by spectacles of cruelty, for him to behold for a single moment, without indignation and horror, the punishments sometimes inflicted on slaves. But, it must be confessed, it is still more revolting, to see
women

women present, and even presiding at them, or sometimes inflicting the punishments themselves. I have been at tables, where, for some trifling fault, the master has coolly ordered a footman a hundred blows with a stick, as a mere matter of course; and he has been immediately conducted into the court, or into the anti-chamber only, in presence of the ladies, married and unmarried, who continued to eat and laugh while they heard the cries of the poor fellow being cudgelled*.

I am

* The little reflection with which a man is ordered to be bastinadoed produced a strange blunder a few years ago. Count Bruce, governor-general of Petersburg, had a slave for his cook, who ran away. At court he saw Kleief, the master of the police, and gave him orders to make the necessary search in order to recover his cook. This was done, but in vain. Just at this period a French cook arrived from Warsaw, who was come to seek employment in Russia, and had been recommended to Kleief by one of his friends in Poland. Kleief, thinking to provide the man a place
at

I am not the first person by whom it has been observed, that in Russia the women are usually more spiteful, more cruel, and more barbarous than the men: and it is because they are still much more ignorant and more superstitious. They scarcely ever travel, are taught very little, and do nothing. Surrounded by slaves, to gratify or prevent their wishes, the Russian ladies spend their time loung-

at once, sent him immediately to Bruce, telling the Frenchman, that he need only say he came from him. Accordingly count Bruce was informed by his servant, that a cook was come, sent by the master of the police. "O," said he, "my fellow is come, is he? Let him have two hundred stripes immediately, and then conduct him to the kitchen." The servants of the governor immediately seized the poor devil, and conducted him to the riding house. There, in spite of his cries and protestations, he received the punishment ordered. His surprise and terror may easily be conceived. He was left half dead, and scarcely able to crawl to the ambassador, to whom he made his complaint. Bruce, informed of his mistake, hushed up the affair for a few hundred rubles, which he gave the unlucky French cook.

ing

ing on a sofa, or at a card table. They are very seldom seen with a book in their hands, still seldomer with any kind of work, or attending to their domestic affairs. They, who have not been humanised by a foreign education, are still actual barbarians. Among them you may find such women as Juvenal describes, where he mentions one, who, speaking to a person that entreated her to spare a slave she was ordering to be punished, and conjured her to take pity on the man, answered: "Blockhead! is a slave a "man?" and another, that said to some friends, who appeared frightened at some screams they heard while she was shewing them her jewels and trinkets, "It is "nothing at all, it is only a man I have "ordered to be flogged."

If there were such women at Rome, what may be expected at Petersburg and Mosco? Some horrible instances might
be

be mentioned, were they not too dreadful and too indelicate to detail—they are sphinxes also, and proceeded from monsters in their kind; nor ought they even to be alluded to, but to shew how far the ferociousness of a woman can carry her, when she seems authorized by the customs of the country. Ought we to be surprised, if bad governments pervert the hearts of men, when they transform the gentler and more susceptible sex into raging beasts? One who bears the title of princess, though she deserves not that of woman, by name K ky, exhibits a picture of crimes, rage, and turpitude, at which the reader would shudder.

The outrages which she perpetrated on her slaves at Mosco, obliged the brother of this Tisiphone to send her to Petersburg, to save her from the vengeance of the people. He was at length compelled to forbid her to employ her own slaves as domestics,
and

and she was fain to hire free persons, who never staid more than a day with her; and at length she was attended wholly by soldiers, who were sent to her house for the purpose.

This monster of cruelty is forty years of age, immensely tall, and of huge stature, resembling one of those sphinxes found among the gigantic monuments of Egypt. She is still living.

I knew another lady of the court, who had in her bedchamber a sort of dark cage, in which she kept a slave, who dressed her hair. She took him out herself every day, as you would take a comb out of its case, in order to dress her head, and immediately shut him up again, though seldom without his having had his ears boxed while she was at her toilette. The poor fellow had a bit of bread, a pitcher of water, a little stool, and a chamberpot in his

his box. He never saw day-light but while he was dressing the perriwig on the bald pate of his old keeper. This portable prison was kept close at her bed's head, and carried with her into the country. And her husband permitted this abomination ! How could he sleep undisturbed by the sighs of the poor wretch, lying thus shut up by his side ? He spent three whole years in this *gehenna* ; and when he made his re-appearance he was frightful to look at, pale, bent, and withered like an old man. The chief motive of this strange barbarity was the wish of the old baggage to conceal from the world that she wore false hair : and for this she sequestered a man of eighteen from all human society, that he might renovate in secret her faded charms. The fasting and ill treatment which she made him endure besides, were to punish him for having attempted to escape, and because,

cause, in spite of all his art and care, she grew every day more old and ugly.

Still I must repeat, I do not mention these infamous acts, not more incredible than they are true, as general and characteristic of the Russian ladies: they are the crimes of individuals; but these crimes could not have been committed, except in Russia. In any other country, the relations, the friends, the acquaintances of the furies by whom they were perpetrated, would not have looked upon them as singularities of their humour; and the relations of the young man would have had a right to prefer a complaint against his mistress, and to demand justice*.

* During the reign of Elizabeth, a grandmother of these furies had already distinguished herself by similar atrocities, and her relations were obliged to confine her.

It

It was not at the court and in domestic affairs only, that the women assumed a superiority over the men. Nowhere did so many women arrogate to themselves the right of making the first advances, and being the active party, in affairs of love. The example of Catharine was but too well calculated to give them those bold and masculine taste and manners.

Almost all the ladies of the court kept men with the title and office of favorites: I do not say lovers, for that would imply sentiment; while theirs was merely gross desire, or frequently a wish to follow the fashion. This taste was become as common as eating and drinking, or dancing and music. Tender intrigues were unknown, and strong passions still more rare*. Debauchery and ambition had banished

* The young princess Shakofsky, who was married to count Aremberg, lately furnished a very tragical exception.

banished love. Marriage was merely an association, in which convenience alone was considered: it was fortunate if friendship sometimes came unfought, to lighten the chains which the interest of parents, or vanity alone, had formed.

The discovery of a society, called the Club of Natural Philosophers, made a few years ago at Mosco, completely proves

exception. At the period of the revolution in Brabant, in which her husband took an active part, Catharine ordered her to leave the seditious count, and return to Russia, under pain of confiscation of all her property. She returned, under the care of her old mother, and Catharine declared her marriage null. One of her cousins ran away with her to Mosco, to marry her there, that he might the more easily obtain a dispensation afterwards. However, he possessed not the heart of his young wife, or at least did not occupy it entirely. She loved an officer in the guards, of the name of Kamasoffky. The jealousy of her husband having traced her rendezvous, and complained of them, the princess poisoned herself, and died in dreadful convulsions. Her husband, a man of a melancholy cast, lost his reason for a time, and his happiness for ever.

†

the

the depravity of tastes and manners under the reign of Catharine. This was a kind of order surpassing in turpitude every thing related of the most immodest institutions and mysteries. The men and women, who were initiated, assembled on certain days, to indulge promiscuously in the most infamous debaucheries. Husbands introduced their wives into this society; and brothers, their sisters. The novices were not admitted, till they had been examined, and gone through their probations; the women being admitted by the men; the men, by the women. After a sumptuous feast the company were paired by lot. When the French revolution took place, the Russian police was directed to examine and dissolve all kinds of orders and assemblies; and on this occasion the Club of Natural Philosophers was examined, and its members were obliged to disclose its mysteries. As the members of both sexes belonged

to the most wealthy and powerful families, and their assemblies had nothing to do with politics, nothing more was done than to shut up and prohibit their scandalous lodge.

Many accounts of the Russian baths have been given; but, as they have a great influence on the character and manners of the women of the lower class in particular, it may not be amiss to speak of them here with this view. At my arrival in Russia, one of my first objects was to examine them. I figured in my mind the voluptuous baths of Diana, and thought of nothing less than surprising the nymphs like another Acteon. Accordingly one day I descended the banks of the Neva with a friend, towards a public bath; but I had no occasion to go far, before I was convinced that the Russian belles were accustomed to expose their charms to the eye of the passenger. A
party

party of women of all ages, tempted by the heat of the month of June, had not thought it necessary to go so far as the precincts of the baths. They had stripped themselves, and were swimming and sporting near the banks of the river. This spectacle, to which I was not accustomed, made the most lively impression on me; and I stopped, and leaned over the quay, without my presence proving any interruption to the sports of the bathers.

I have since been several times in the baths, and I have seen similar fights on the banks of the islands of the Neva*: but,

* On one of these occasions, an old woman seeing some men of her acquaintance bathing a little way off, swam up to them, and began a conflict with one of them. The young man not being a swimmer, his antagonist had the advantage, and seizing him by the beard, ducked him repeatedly, to the great amusement of both parties, as well as the spectators, who
laughed

but, after what I have said, more ample accounts are unnecessary. It is true, there exists an ukase of Catharine, which enjoins the conductors of the public baths in the cities to construct separate baths for the two sexes; and not to allow any men to enter into the women's bath, except the necessary attendants, or painters, and physicians, who come there to prosecute their studies. Accordingly an amateur assumes one or other of these titles to obtain admission. At Petersburg both sexes now have their sweating rooms and baths separated by a partition; but many old women still prefer mixing with the men; and besides, both men and women, after having taken the hot bath, run out perfectly naked to plunge toge-

laughed heartily at the scene. This transaction took place near a part of the shore, where persons of all ages and sexes were walking, and the young ladies in the neighbouring houses might enjoy it from their windows.

ther

ther into the river that runs behind it. In the country, the baths are still on the old footing; that is to say, persons of all ages and both sexes use them together, and a family consisting of a father of forty, a mother of thirty-five, a son of twenty, and a daughter of fifteen, appear together in a state of innocence, and mutually rub down each other.

These customs, which appear to us so shocking, and which are so to all people who wear clothes and are no longer savage, are yet by no means the effect of corrupt hearts, and do not indicate libertinism. It is not even these baths, so conducive to the health of the Russians, that lead them into debauchery. On the contrary, the habit of seeing everything unveiled continually, and from an early age, deadens the senses, and cools the imagination. A Russian youth will never feel his blood boil, and his heart palpitate,

pitate, at the idea of a rising bosom. He never sighs after secret charms, at which he scarcely dares to guess; for from his infancy he has seen and examined every thing. The Russian maiden will never have her cheek overspread with an involuntary blush at an indiscreet idea or curiosity, and her husband will have nothing new to shew or to teach her, nor will marriage have any novelty for her. Love is here a stranger to those delicate and exquisite approaches which constitute its true charms, and to those preludes to pleasure more delightful than pleasure itself. Where poignant sentiments do not ennoble the happiest of human passions, it becomes a mere momentary impulse, too easily gratified to be highly prized.

The land of slavery is not that of the noble passions; it would be difficult to find in it the materials for a romance.

Yet

Yet the Russian is sensible, gay, sings and dances willingly, and the collection of popular songs bears witness, that he formerly felt the inspiration of love. In these an exquisite sensibility and affecting melancholy frequently appear, which interest and delight the reader*.

What I have said of the Russian ladies, among whom there are so many amiable and charming†, I fear, will tend to ex-

* If a change of circumstances should take place, and I can renew my acquaintance with some of the men of letters in Russia, I shall some day make known a few pieces of this kind.

† Perhaps the unfortunate chance which gave me a close view of the most malignant and contemptible of the sex, has mixed some gall with my ink in spite of myself. It must be confessed, likewise, that the girls appear as reserved and modest as the women do impudent. They are born susceptible of the most profound and gentle sentiments: it is with difficulty, that examples and the general corruption render them depraved.

cite

cite too unfavorable an idea of them. Almost all of them are naturally witty, and by no means destitute of grace; their eyes, feet, and hands, are everything that could be wished; and there is an ease in their manners, a taste in their dress, and charm in their conversation, which are peculiarly agreeable.

These sprightly and amiable Russian ladies have taste for the arts. They laugh at the representation of a good comedy, readily perceive a satirical stroke, perfectly understand an equivoque, and applaud a brilliant line: but traits of sentiment appear lost on them, and I never saw one weep at a tragedy.

The domestic virtues, and that spirit of order and economy so necessary to a moderate fortune, are rarely to be found among the Russian women. They would rather be the delight of society, than superintend

perintend their family affairs; and are more calculated to give pleasure to many, than to confer happiness on one. But all the charms that luxury sets off, all the enchanting talents that ease of circumstances affords opportunity of cultivating, commonly heighten the beauty of the young Russians. They particularly excel in speaking foreign languages, and there are several who speak three or four in equal perfection *.

Those who have had a good education, whom the manners of their families, and

* A Livonian lady, who has received a tolerable education, speaks German, which is her native language; Russian, with which she cannot dispense; and French, which is the language of fashion: to these several add Italian, on account of music; and some, English. They speak, besides, the Livonian, or the Esthonian, which are the peculiar and original languages of their provinces. The Livonian women, however, are of a different character from the Russians.

the

the care of a prudent governess, or respectable mother, have formed to the graces, without moulding to vice; those in particular, whom reading, or some travelling, has improved; deserve one of the first places among the amiable women of Europe*. But these are flowers thinly sown, and blooming in secret. Superstition, envy, and calumny rage against them; and if they cannot support the torture inflicted on them by the conversation of the gossips of the place, they are obliged to form a circle of select females, and especially foreigners†, which redoubles

* I could easily mention some of these respectable women, as I have the despicable: but I shall not be blamed for sparing the modesty of those, more than the impudence of these.

† M. Kapiel has written a tolerable comedy, in which he has endeavoured to display the ridiculousness of these gossips. The gaiety and mask of Thalia herself were requisite, to render what is most stupid and insipid in life entertaining; but he dared not copy the originals with fidelity.

the

the hatred and persecution raised against them.

It will not be amiss to finish this delineation of the Russian women with some particulars of the princess Dashkof, who of all the women of Russia next to Catharine, has been most the subject of conversation, and whose portrait would form a proper companion for that of Potemkin, were it drawn by the hand of the same master *. I will neither refute nor repeat what has been said a hundred times in print of this virago, the real heroine of the revolution of 1762. For some years the friendship between her and her royal mistress had singularly altered, and the

* It may be found in a book intitled *Vie de Catharine II.* The author or compiler of this history, however, has been led into mistakes respecting a number of facts and persons. The princess Dashkof was already in disgrace, and had left Petersburg, when he speaks of her as still there; and the outlines of the work are as false as they are improbable.

following

following is the true cause of the last quarrel, which was never made up.

In hopes of gaining a few rubles, in 1794, the princess directed a posthumous tragedy of Kniaigenin * to be printed at the expence of the academy. At any other period no notice would have been taken of this piece, the merit of which was trifling. But from the time of the French revolution, and particularly after the death of Potemkin, Catharine had become fearful and suspicious. This tragedy was mentioned to her as a suspicious piece. It was prohibited; all the copies were seized, and search actually made for those that had been already sold. As the work had been printed by the express orders of Mrs. President Dashkof †, she was
sent

* A Russian author of considerable repute.

† The reader will pardon me this solecism, which is employed in the Russian. She was appointed by an
ukase

sent for by the empress. “ Good God,
“ what have I done to you, that you
“ should print such an infamous and
“ dangerous work ?” said Catharine,
with great emotion : “ if it be so great
“ a crime to reign, was it not you who
“ made me guilty of it ?” The princess,
surprised at this pointed attack, said in
excuse, that she had no ill design, and had
not even read the piece, having relied on
the censor. To this Catharine sharply
replied, that in such critical times people
should rely on no person, but do their duty
themselves. Madam Dashkof, mortified
at this reprimand, procured her nephew,
Bakunin, to be vice-president, to supply
her place, and asked permission to retire
to Mosco, which was granted her. The

ukase president and director, in the masculine gender,
and she was addressed by the title of *madame le presi-*
dent.

censor

cenfor was punished ; and it was happy for the author that he was dead *.

The princess had long rendered herself odious and contemptible by her sordid avarice. This celebrated conspirator, who boasted of having given away a crown, sent to all the officers or *aides-de-camp* of her acquaintance, to beg old epaulettes and old lace. To untwist and sell these was become her chief employment ; and persons, who were interested in obtaining

* The scene of this piece, intitled *Vadime*, is laid at Novgorod the Great, at that time a republic, but oppressed by the princes of Moscow, from whose yoke it was desirous of emancipating itself. This *Vadime* is the hero of the story ; and the following passages, which are all that I preserved, are, I believe, the most alarming in the work. *Vadime*, conspiring to restore liberty to his country, says :

“ A king unites the weaknesses of a man with the
“ power of a God.”

“ To wear a crown is sufficient soon to render a
“ man corrupt and wicked.”

her

her favor, began by sending her old gold or silver lace. She made no fires in winter in the apartments of the academy, and yet expected that the academicians should regularly attend the meetings. Many chose rather to expose themselves to her vulgar abuse, and lose their medals, than shiver in an ice-house: but the princess never failed to be there, muffled up in rich furs; and it was a singular spectacle to see this lady only, seated in the midst of bearded popes and Russian professors, trembling and submissive before her; for she treated these academicians with a haughtiness and even brutality worthy of Peter I. She took men of letters for soldiers, and the sciences for slaves.

Her adventure with Gregory Razomofsky made all Peterburgh laugh, and rendered her contemptible in the eyes of every man of sense. She had sent him an academician's diploma unsolicited.

Some time after she dispatched to him a bale of Russian books, to the value of about 600 rubles (60*l.*). Razomofsky declined them, saying that he had the originals of these Russian translations already in his library*. The princess replied, that she had created him an academician only on condition of his purchasing these books; and in consequence Razomofsky returned his diploma. The princess wished to persuade the world, that he was not in his senses; but the ridicule fell upon herself. Thus she prostituted her academy: as to herself, she had done that long before†.

What

* When I began to understand a little of the Russian language, I wished to read some of their original works: but I was astonished to find, that what were given me for such was frequently a translation of some well known work, but which was never mentioned in the title page.

† One day having lost thirty rubles at cards to S—, she sent him the next morning thirty of the academy's almanacs

What rendered her completely ridiculous, both at court and in the city, was her lawsuit with Alexander Narishkin, who had an estate near hers. One day Narishkin's pigs got into the grounds of the princess, and devoured some of her cabbages. The heroine ordered them all to be massacred. Narishkin, seeing her at court, said "There she is, still red with the blood of —* my pigs."

Such was this celebrated woman, who prided herself on the share which she had in the revolution of 1762, who went to fifty-cuffs with her landlady in Holland, who attempted to blow out the brains of the

almanacs by way of payment. I speak here only of her ridiculous meanness: the turpitude of her manners would carry me too far.

* This marked pause brought to the hearer's mind Peter III. and the crimson face of the princess was singularly suited to the expression used.

poor abbé Chappe at Paris, whom German authors, on whom she never bestowed a farthing, treated in vain as a genius, and who at last became a laughing-stock to all Russia.

CHAP. X.

EDUCATION.

Anecdotes of the education of the grand-dukes—their governors and preceptors—Education of the Russians in general—Of the outshiteli, or tutors, their influence—Of the young Russians—Proceedings of the present emperor unfriendly to civilisation—The Gazettes—Radischef—Fable of the owl and glow-worm.

CATHARINE composed a plan of education for her grand-children*, as she had also instructions for the legislation of her people. This plan, compiled from

* This has never been printed. Catharine gave copies of it to the chief persons employed in educating the

from Locke and Rousseau, as the instructions had been from Montesquieu, Mably, and Beccaria, does honor to the empress's head; and had she possessed no other merit than that of adopting the ideas and maxims contained in it, this would not have been small. Had this plan been followed, Alexander and Constantine Pavlovitch would certainly have been the best educated princes in Europe. But it happened to Catharine's plan of education, as it did to the instructions for her code. The compiling of the laws ended, as has been observed, with being abandoned to the management of a committee, which happily never assembled; and the education of the young princes was entrusted to people, scarcely capable of reading the plan, the letter of which they were to follow, and the spirit of which they were

the princes, by which to regulate their mode of tuition. It was drawn up in the form of instructions, and addressed to count Nicholas Soltikof.

to

to study *. The only rule they appeared to comprehend was the following, probably because it was negative. “The
 “ grand-dukes are to be taught neither
 “ poetry nor music; because it would
 “ occupy too much of their time to attain
 “ excellence in either.” This rule they took pains to extend to all the sciences †.

It

* In the badness of her choice here Catharine resembled Peter I. That illustrious instructor of his people was a very bad one for his only son. After having allowed him to spend his infancy with monks, priests, and servants, he gave him for a governor Mentchikof, who, it is notorious, was never able to read. It is true, that he appointed for his sub-governor a Dutchman, a man of knowledge, but who soon experienced the same fate as la Harpe, the tutor to the grand-duke Alexander.

† This has certainly the least merit of any rule in the instructions. Not that a prince should be made a fidler, or a poet; but it is impossible to give him too much taste for those arts which inspire and cherish sensibility of mind. The accurate sciences, which are said to render the judgment more exact, deaden the feelings. History is the proper study of princes and regents.

It was the intention of Catharine, however, that her grandchildren should be instructed in every science capable of enlightening their reason or adorning their minds. A man of superior talents, la Harpe, was chosen for their first preceptor. He had incessantly to strive against the interested flattery and base adulation which surrounded them from the cradle. The ill will and ineptitude of the chief persons concerned in their education were a still greater restraint upon him. But the esteem and confidence with which he was honored by Catharine, gave him encouragement; and the idea, that he was

gents. Without the belles lettres, Frederic the Great would have been nothing but a tyrant: with them Peter I. would have ceased to be a ferocious barbarian. God preserve all monarchies from having geometricians or mathematicians for their kings: they measure men by the yard, and reckon them as they would their money. The most important matter is, to be humane, good, and just; but with that justice, which arises from a sense of truth, not that, which is proved by $a+b$.

rendering

rendering an important service to humanity, by instilling useful truths into the minds of princes called to decide the fate of so many millions, afforded him support. Inflexible in his course, he rendered himself beloved by one of his pupils, feared by the other, respected by those under him, and esteemed by his superiors. He was seconded by some of the cavaliers of honor that were appointed them *: and at some future period, perhaps, Russia will be more indebted to la Harpe, than to his countryman le Fort; for, if Peter I. reformed and civilised his people, Alexander gives hopes of rendering them some day more free and happy.

The frankness with which la Harpe professed republican sentiments in Russia,

* Particularly the two *Morawiefs*, who cultivated literature, and possessed considerable merit and talents, and one *Tutulmin*, a man of sense and good breeding.

exposed

exposed him to the shafts of the envious. The Bernese, having seized his letters to his cousin, general la Harpe, sent them to Catharine. The Prince of Nassau and Esterhazy, whose wife is a native of Berne, were his accusers, and endeavoured to represent him as a very dangerous man in the confidential post he occupied. Catharine sent for him into her closet; the following are the particulars of the interview:

Catharine. Come, sit down, Mr. Jacobin; I have something to say to you.

La Harpe. I must protest against the title which your majesty thinks proper to give me, and know not how I have deserved it.

The empress then shewed him the letters she had received, and informed him of the charges brought against him.

To

To this la Harpe replied nearly in the following words: Your majesty knew, previous to entrusting me with the education of the grand-dukes, that I was a Swiss, and consequently a republican. I have not changed my sentiments; and you are too just, madam, to consider that as a crime in me now, which did not appear so then. My countrymen are oppressed by the Bernese; I exhort them to claim, by legal modes, our antient rights: this is not being factious. For the rest, madam, I admire your great qualities, I respect your government, and I faithfully discharge the duties I imposed upon myself, when I devoted myself to the education of the grand-dukes. I shall always endeavour to render myself worthy of the confidence with which you have honored me, by inspiring them with sentiments suitable to their birth and condition, and by endeavoring to render them capable of imitating, some future day, the example you have set before them. This, madam,

is

is my defence: it remains with your majesty to pass judgment on me, after examining into my conduct in the post with which you have deigned to entrust me.

Catharine, struck with this frankness, replied: "Sir, be a jacobin, a republican, or what you please: I believe you are an honest man, and that is sufficient for me. Stay with my grandchildren, retain my perfect confidence, and instruct them with your wonted zeal*."

Such was Catharine. Her conduct as well as that of la Harpe will be better appreciated, when it is considered, that this happened at the very period when the Austrians were flying before Dumouriez, soon after the death of Lewis XVI. when Gustavus was dying

* It was in a similar conversation, that la Harpe one day made Catharine sensible of the danger of sending a Russian army against the French.

from

from the wound inflicted by the assassin Ankerstrøm, when Leopold was said to have been taken off by poison, and when every king in Europe trembled on his throne. His accusers, however, though rebuffed, were not silenced; but the marriage of the grand-duke Alexander, putting an end to the term of his education, la Harpe took his leave.

Nicholas Soltikof I have mentioned in another place. Chief governor of the young princes, his principal occupations were to defend them from currents of air, and keep their bodies open. Protasof, the governor of the elder, would have been more in his place had he been named apothecary. He came every day to make a circumstantial report to Soltikof of the most insipid particulars. Though a man of a narrow understanding, bigoted, and pusillanimous, he had not a bad heart; but he rendered himself ridiculous

culous in the eyes of every one, except his pupil; who saw in him nothing but his attachment to himself, for which he expressed his gratitude.

M. von Sacken was governor of the younger prince, after having been preceptor to Paul. He was superior in every respect to his colleague; but his easy and complying character rendered him the sport of his pupil*, whose petulance and want of application, as well as his unconquerable obstinacy, required a man of firmness constantly about him, and la Harpe alone retained some power over him, and might have been able to

* Sacken was incessantly preaching to the prince, and exhorting him to read. "I won't read," said Constantine to him one day, "for I see you always reading, and you only prove the greater blockhead for it." This sarcasm produced a laugh. He would strike and bite his governors, his chevaliers, and his masters. La Harpe was the only person who complained, and requested he might be corrected.

bend

bend his natural ferocity, had he been seconded.

Among the masters of the grand-dukes, professor Kraft, who gave them lessons in experimental philosophy, was distinguished for his good-nature, perspicuity, and immoveable methodicalness. Alexander Pavlovitch made some progress in this science; being attentive, and desirous of learning, as he was in all his studies. Kraft, speaking one day of the hypotheses of some philosophers on the nature of light, said, that Newton supposed it to be a constant emanation from the sun. Alexander, then twelve years of age, answered: "I do not believe it: for, "if it were, the sun must grow less every "day." This objection, made with equal simplicity and acuteness, is in fact the strongest that has been brought against the immortal Newton, and proves the early sagacity of the young grand-duke.

The

The celebrated Pallas was giving the princes a short course of botany in their garden near Pavloffky: but the explanation of Linnæus's system of the sexes gave them the first ideas of those of human nature, and led them to put a number of very laughable questions with great simplicity. This highly alarmed their governors; Pallas was requested to avoid entering into further particulars; and the course of botany was even broken off. Catharine had particularly enjoined, that her pupils should be kept in the most perfect ignorance, in what related to the intercourse of the sexes. Her great modesty in this respect appears strikingly contrasted with other parts of her character. But it is well known, that the regent of France, who was the most debauched of men, caused Lewis XV. to be brought up in such complete ignorance of things, which he afterwards so extensively practised, that on the eve of his marriage, he was obliged

obliged to be taught his part, by being shewn prints in which it was displayed. Catharine thought it better, that her grandchildren should receive their first lessons in nature. At least, a lady of the name of T.....kof was chosen to initiate the grand-duke Constantine; from which she reaped the pleasure, as her husband did honor and promotion.

One of Catharine's most ardent wishes was, to see her great grandchildren like Lewis XIV. That a moment might not be lost, she ordered the instant of their puberty to be watched; but her hope was frustrated by the very impatience with which she sought its accomplishment. These premature marriages appear only to have ruined their constitutions. Neither of the young princes have as yet had any children, and it is to be feared they never will*.

* Their marriages have been mentioned in the first chapter.

The birth of the two grand-dukes had filled the empress with joy. Her vast projects and hopes expatiated in a wider field, of which the very names of the princes gave intimation. She had the infants everywhere painted, one cutting the gordian knot, the other bearing the cross of Constantine; for them she was desirous of renewing the division of the world into two empires. Their education seemed at first to be merely the developement of these grand ideas. Constantine had Grecian nurses, and was surrounded by Greeks: in his infancy he spoke no other language, but he forgot it, as soon as masters were appointed to teach it him in a better manner. The persons about Alexander were Englishmen, and endeavours were made to inspire him with a predilection for that nation, which he may, perhaps, some day discard, as his brother became disgusted with Greece.

I have

I have already observed, that Paul had neither authority nor influence over the education of his children. He was obliged to solicit Soltikof's permission to see them; or to gain their valets-de-chambre, to know what was doing with respect to them. During the summer they had permission to spend an hour or two with their parents once or twice a week. Paul deprived himself of this pleasure for one whole year, because he would not see the countess Shuvalof by whom they were latterly attended.

The Russians in general, following the example of their latter sovereigns, had for some time endeavoured to emerge from barbarism, and attended to the education of their children with much care. To bestow on them knowledge and talents, was formerly the happy means of bringing them into notice, and procuring them advancement. They spared neither

pains nor expence to cultivate the arts and sciences in a country where these were strangers, as they force fruits to ripen in their winter gardens and hot-houses. Elizabeth and Catharine founded several institutions in favor of youth, some of which, as the normal schools and particularly the three different corps of cadets, presented the interesting sight of several thousand young men educated at the expence of the state, and taught morality, languages, sciences, and arts. Those are now either abolished or suffered to fall to decay.

The convent of young ladies, though the sentiments from which it was founded were worthy of the generosity of a great princess, has completely failed of its end, like most of the other institutions. Two or three hundred young women of no fortune receive here an excellent education; but, as soon as they reach the age of
eighteen,

eighteen, they are turned out of doors. They enter into a world from which they have lived secluded since their infancy; seldom find either relations, or any who know them; and are ignorant whither to turn. In consequence they fall victims to the officers of the guards, whose barracks surround the convent, and who watch every term of dismissal to ensnare the prettiest. It would be very practicable to save, out of the immense cost of their education, a sufficient sum to portion them, or at least to keep them till they were provided for.

The education of those young Russians, who have some fortune, is commonly entrusted to private governors, known and decried in Russia by the name of *outshteli*, "teachers." Most of them are foreigners, chiefly French or Swiss. The Germans, in spite of their good qualities and pedagogical erudition, differ too widely in character

character from the Russians, to rival them; and the trials which some have wished to make of their own countrymen from the university of Mosco, or from the schools of Petersburg, have not given satisfaction. The famous answer of the Grecian philosopher is here applicable. To a man, who said to him: "With what you ask
 " for the education of my son I could
 " purchase a good slave, who would educate him in my own house;" he replied: "Purchase a slave: he and your
 " son will make two."

The *outsiteli*, whom some endeavour to ridicule, and others consider as dangerous, have contributed more than any others to polish Russia, as they have given instruction in detail, man by man. They are the only people whose office has been to preach philosophy, virtue, and morals, while diffusing knowledge. To begin with the celebrated le Fort, who inspired
 Peter

Peter I. with the desire of gaining knowledge, and end with a petty clerk of some French attorney, who teaches his pupils to conjugate a few verbs in his own tongue, the *outshteli* have been the persons who have communicated to the Russians that taste, those acquirements, and those talents, for which many of them are admired in foreign countries. No doubt it is to be lamented, that among the number of those who devote themselves to private tuition, and make it their trade to form men, there are so many unworthy of the employment, whose ignorance and immorality bring ridicule and odium on their colleagues. But such tutors begin to find it difficult to obtain situations, except in remote country places, where some honest Russians of the old stamp fancy they have bestowed a good education on their children, when they hear them speak a foreign language. At Petersburg people were become more difficult in the choice

choice of tutors, and among them were to be found persons of real merit. They were the only class of men in Russia, without excepting the academicians, who cultivated literature and the sciences, which they did in some degree. A Brueckner, in the house of prince Kurakin; a Grammont, at the princess Dolgoruka's; a Lindqwist, an abbé Nicole, and several others, without having places equally advantageous*, were worthy of the profession to which they devoted themselves, and were distinguished for their success as much as for their merit.

The great men of Russia, who have much wealth and high posts, are too ignorant, or too much engaged in gaming

* Mr. Brueckner received thirty-five thousand rubles (3500*l.*) for the fourteen years he engaged to devote to the education of the young princes Kurakin; and Grammont received twenty-five thousand (2500*l.*) for the education of the princes Dolgoruky.

and

and intrigue, to interfere with the education of their children ; and as colleges and universities are wanting in that country, they pursue a very prudent plan. As soon as they have made choice of the man who is to supply their place in the duties of a father, they confer on him great power and confidence : the most intelligent could not do better, were they discerning in their choice. It is seldom that a governor is so destitute of sense, information, and honor, as to abuse his functions ; he feels himself most happily disposed towards his pupil : to instruct him, form him, acquire his attachment, and gain his love, are the wishes of his heart. If he be in a worthy, opulent house, he has no occasion to regret the sacrifice of ten or twelve years of his life, as he will be provided for *. In his pupil
he

* The great French lords sometimes gave rich abbeyes to their tutors : the wealthy English act
still

he often finds a real friend, and always a protector. His own interest prompts him to inspire his pupil with just and noble sentiments, and to give him a taste for the sciences; which is far more important, and far more difficult, than to teach him the elements of them. Thus, most of the young Russians pass their early days with a foreigner, who becomes their second father, and for whom they retain a due sense of gratitude, if they are in the least well born.

This education by means of foreigners has one peculiar effect. Almost all the Russians, being educated by Frenchmen, contract from their infancy a decided predilection for France. With its language

still more generously. The Russians frequently follow their example: their governors receive annuities at their departure, or places and rank if they settle in Russia. Thus at least those have acted who have not considered the tutors of their children as their head servants.

and

and history they are better acquainted than with their own; and as, in fact, they have no country, France becomes that of their heart and imagination. Such was the Scythian Anacharsis educated by Theogenes the Greek: such were the Romans formed by Grecian masters; but the Romans had virtues to lose, which is scarcely the case with the Russians. Besides, they learn to know France only in the most pleasing aspect, as it appears when at a distance. They are taught to consider it as the country of taste, politeness, arts, delicate pleasures, and amiable men: as the asylum of liberty, as the altar of that sacred fire at which the torch may one day be kindled to illumine their benighted country. The French emigrants, driven to the territories of the modern Cimmerians, were astonished to find there men better acquainted than themselves with the affairs of their own country: but these were young Russians who had

had read, and meditated on what they read, from Rousseau and Mirabeau; the emigrants had read nothing, and brought nothing with them but their prejudices. Many young Russians were better acquainted with Paris, than those who had spent their lives in roaming about its streets*. It has in general been remarked, that the Russians have the most happy dispositions, and a surprising readiness of conception; whence they make a very rapid progress in everything that is taught them. There are no children more amiable or more interesting: many, when their domestic education is finished, have acquired more select and extensive knowledge, than other young men who have

* Count Butturlin had obtained this local knowledge to that degree, that he could carry on the most minute conversation with a Parisian on the theatres, streets, hotels, and public buildings of Paris. The Frenchman was astonished, when the Russian confessed at last that he had never been in France.

frequented

frequented the German universities: and they have particularly a wonderful readiness at displaying their knowledge on seasonable occasions. Too frequently, however, these are precocious flowers, that produce no fruit: they seldom travel like an Anacharsis; and their return to their own country usually puts an end to their studies, and even to their taste for science and literature.

Telle on voit s'élever l'alouette légère ;
Elle charme un instant par son chant matinal,
Puis retombe et se tait sur le gazon natal *.

“ So the gay lark, with light ascending wing,
“ Soars high in air to charm the meads around,
“ Till ceasing thus in strain sublime to sing,
“ Silent he sinks upon his natal ground.”

In the same manner a Swiss, after having spent his youth in the service of France, and contracted splendid vices,

* From an epistle to a young Russian.

leaves them on his return to his own country, to resume the simplicity of his ancestors. He returns to virtue, but the Russian returns to barbarism. Strong minds alone, fully captivated with the charms of philosophy or the attractions of true glory, can resist the torrent : for those talents, which the emperors pretended to encourage, became at length a motive for exclusion from the posts and honors of the court. Thus the manners of Europe, and even the character of Catharine, were in perpetual contradiction with the barbarous forms and impulse once given to the Russian government. The influence of foreign preceptors over the character and morality of the Russians is combated by prejudices and obstacles almost invincible : but this influence is constant and continual ; it operates in secret on the mind ; and its progress, slow as the foot of time, is but the more certain. Perhaps the young Russian nobility are the best informed

informed and most philosophical in Europe, but a complete counter-revolution has just taken place in their education since the progress of the French revolution, especially since the commencement of the reign of the present emperor and the arrival of the emigrants, the human mind has taken a retrograde course in Russia. Most of the *outshtelis* at present are chevaliers, counts, marquises, or priests; for the same thing has taken place with the emigrants as did formerly with the colonists whom Catharine imported to cultivate her deserts; all who could read and write left their fields to become tutors. But the effects of this will be transient: the new trade adopted by these gentlemen will teach them to think, or they will not pursue it long. It is almost impossible to be an *outshteli*, without becoming in some degree rational: what is heard, seen, and felt, every day, in these territories, must operate

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rate in favor of liberty. A Montmorenci in the post of a tutor could not fail to become a democrat.

In the *Voyage de deux Français en Russie*, “Tour of two Frenchmen in Russia,” are some strange reflections on these *outsiteli*. The travellers are astonished that they are almost all democrats, though enjoying an easy and agreeable life in the house of a great lord; and rally them for not quitting this, to devote their lives to the cause which they espouse. You say that they are acting properly in France; why, then, do you not go thither? This is the dilemma proposed by these gentlemen. But, were any one to praise the custom in China for the emperor to plough a field himself, would they in the same manner say to him, Why do you not repair thither and hold the plough? Such is the inconsistency of people! May not a man acknowledge the truth of a principle, all
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the consequences of which he cannot carry into practice? Must not a Frenchman in Petersburg rejoice at the victories of his country, because he could contribute nothing to them but his secret prayers? May he not rejoice to see liberty, order, and happiness re-established in his country, though he cannot return thither? Such is the language of little minds, who dare not avow a truth when they are in a place where it is dangerous not to deny it.

The progress of the human mind in Russia, however, has lately been stopped, or at least fettered, by the measures, certainly consistent, adopted by the emperor to interrupt all communication between the rest of Europe and his dominions. Peter I. never took so much pains and care to reform and polish his empire as Paul does precautions to pre-

vent light from spreading among his Cimmerians.

A sharper code of laws could not be exhibited to Europe than a collection of the ukases promulgated by Paul since he came to the throne. He has lately forbidden all his subjects, the Livonians and Courlanders in particular, to send their children to study in Germany, because corrupt principles prevail there. He recalls, under penalty of confiscation of their property, all who are at present at any foreign university*: but he promises to permit the establishment of an university in his German provinces, where young men may be instructed in the most necessary sciences. Till this university is founded under his auspices, and the dis-

* There were thirty-six students at Leipzig, and sixty-five at Jena, subjects of the czar, who have just returned home in consequence of this ukase.

ciples

ciples of Kant quit Germany, to visit it in quest of a more luminous philosophy, the Finlanders and Courlanders, Esthoni-ans and Livonians, must remain without any means of instruction; for there are not even any public schools throughout their vast provinces. Paul has also forbidden the employment of foreigners in his courts of justice, and the giving them ecclesiastical benefices. He has even gone farther: by another ukase, he has prohibited all foreigners from entering his dominions without his special permission. This *imménôï-ukase* has not been published: but merchants, foreigners who have property in Russia, and young men who have been sent for thither, are stopped at the frontiers, or on board the vessels in which they arrive, and sent back, after all the expense and danger they have incurred.

Another ukase prohibits the reading of French newspapers. No paper can enter Russia, without having been examined and stamped by a committee of inspection; and every man who receives by the post, by a courier, or from a traveller, any newspaper, or printed book of any kind, is enjoined to carry them immediately to the committee, under penalty of being punished as a rebel!

The people of Germany are more happy, for the Russian newspapers are admitted into that country; though much cannot be said for the amusement or instruction which they contain.

It is to be observed, that, under the reign of Catharine, Russia was for a time the only country in Europe in which French papers were not prohibited. The Moniteur having spoken several times of
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the empress, and particularly of Paul and his court, Catharine gave orders that the *Moniteur* should not be distributed till she had looked it over. A few weeks after she found a paragraph, in which she was styled the *Messalina* of the North, &c. Having read it, she said: "As this concerns only myself, let it be distributed." At a time when French gazettes, cockades, and songs were proscribed in nations farthest from barbarism: when at Turin, they who sung *ça ira* were imprisoned, and at Vienna French was not allowed to be spoken, the Russian government appeared to be above these little inquisitorial acts, and the pupils of Colonel la Harpe were allowed to chaunt French revolutionary airs in the palace of the tzars. One of these carried a national cockade in his pocket, which he displayed with an air of triumph and defiance to the most timorous courtiers. It was not till after the death

death of Lewis XVI. and the assassina-
tion of Gustavus III. that Catharine,
struck with terror, began to yield to the
suggestions of her favorites, and to take
precautions which betrayed her fear*.

Still there was always more to be ap-
prehended from the zeal of the subordi-
nate tools of government, than from the
disposition of Catharine. Among the nu-
merous victims of the political inquisition
Radischev deserves particular regret. It is
well known that Catharine frequently

* One fact will farther prove the noble security of
Catharine. A brother of Marat was at Petersburg,
governor in the house of Soltikof the chamberlain.
This Marat, while he condemned the rage of his bro-
ther, did not conceal from his friends his republican
sentiments, yet he lived in peace, and sometimes at-
tended his pupil to court. However, as his name
might have exposed him to some danger, at the time
of the king's death he requested Catharine's permis-
sion to change it, and called himself Boudri, from the
place of his birth.

fent

sent young Russians to travel and improve themselves at her expense. Several of these were happily chosen, became men of merit, and brought back to their country notions of humanity with the knowledge they acquired. The most distinguished and most unfortunate of these pupils of Catharine was Radischef. On his return he became director of the customs; and in this office of a publican, his probity, the amenity of his manners, and his agreeable company, rendered him esteemed and courted. He cultivated literature, and had already published a work, intitled *Potshta Dukof*, “the Rest of Spirits;” the most philosophical and pointed periodical production that ever ventured to appear in Russia. No disturbance had been given him on account of this: but after the revolution, he had the courage to print a little pamphlet, in which he did not scruple to avow his hatred of despotism, his indignation against the

the favorites, and his esteem for the French. It was singular, that several copies of it contained the approbation of the police. Kleïf, master of the police, as famous in Russia for his blunders, as a d'Argenson, a la Noir, and a Sartine were in France for their address, was cited to answer for this approbation. He knew not what to say, for he had not read the work, which indeed would have been above his comprehension. But Radischef who was also cited, honestly confessed, that the boldest passages were not in the manuscript, when he submitted it to the censors, but that he had printed them at his own house*. To have pardoned him would

* Radischef's work is intitled a Journey to Mosco. Russian merchants have been known to give five and twenty rubles (2*l.* 10*s.*) to have it for a single hour to read in secret. I have read only a few fragments of it, among which was an allegory, in which he exposes the pride and foolish grandeur of a despot surrounded by dastardly flatterers. The following words particularly enraged Catharine, because they were pointedly directed

would have been worthy of the character which Catharine displayed on other occasions: but Radischef was sent off to Siberia. He begged permission to embrace his wife and children once more; and when he was taken out of his prison to be sent off, he was allowed to wait for them a moment on the bank of the Neva: but it was night; the drawbridge had just been raised to let a vessel through, and at this instant his unfortunate wife arrived on the opposite bank. Radischef entreated that his departure might be deferred till the vessel had passed, or his wife could get a boat; but in vain: his pitiless guard made him get into his tumbrel again, in sight of his distracted wife, who stretched out her arms to him across the river with

rected at her: "I enter the palace of Tzarsko-selo: "I am struck with the alarming silence that reigns: "every one holds his peace, every one trembles; for it "is the abode of despotism." These words procured Radischef a residence in Siberia.

loud

loud cries. Thus he departed, his heart torn by despair. If he be still living in the vast deserts to which he is confined, or if he draw breath in the mines of Kollivan, may his virtue be his comforter! His courage, however, has not been useless: in spite of the searches made after every copy, his work remains in the hands of several of his countrymen, to whom his memory is dear.

The proscription of every one who dared to think, suggested the following fable, when the present emperor was grand-duke:

LE GRAND-DUC*

ET

LE VER LUISANT.

FABLE.

DANS une sombre nuit d'été
Un ver luisant caché sous l'herbe
Jetoit une douce clarté.
Ce n'étoit point un phare éclatant et superbe,
Il n'éclairait qu'un pas à l'environ;
C'étoit là son horizon:
Mais pourtant l'insecte lucide
Servoit de guide
Aux petits hôtes du gazon.

* A nocturnal bird, found particularly in Russia. See Buffon.

Duc, in French, signifies both a duke and a horned owl: *le grand-duc* is the great horned-owl in natural history.—*T.*

A fa

A sa lueur douce et tranquille,
La fourmi retardée atteignoit son azile,
Le papillon léger s'égayoit à l'entour :
En un mot, cet astre reptile
Embellissoit les nuits de son humble séjour.

Non loin de là, dans une vieille tour,
Prison de sa triste famille,
Un vieux hibou tenoit sa cour.

Un hibon hait les *vers* qui lui montrent le jour.

“ Audacieux ! ” dit il à l'insecte qui brille,

“ Qui t'a fait si hardi que d'approcher de nous ? ”

“ Tu mourras. ” — “ Monseigneur, ” lui répond

“ l'humble insecte,

“ Je suis indigne, hélas ! d'un si noble courroux.

“ Je vous honore, vous respecte ;

“ Je tremble d'approcher de vous :

“ A fucer la rosée ici je me délecte ;

“ Mais d'aucun bruit pourtant je ne trouble vos

“ nuits.

“ Comment un animal foible comme je suis

“ Peut-il offenser Votre Altesse ? ” —

“ Insecte dangereux ! *tu lui* ;

“ Péris, la lumière me blesse. ”

Cela

Cela dit, le nocturne oiseau,
En écrasant le ver, éteignit son flambeau
Sans rendre la nuit plus épaisse.

THE
OWL AND THE GLOW-WORM.

A FABLE.

'Twas on a sombre summer night,
A glow-worm, shelter'd by a flow'r,
Spread round its paly glimm'ring light,
To decorate the silent hour:
No brilliant beam, no gaudy glare,
Diffus'd afar its lustrous ray,
But thro' the softly breathing air
The insect shed its mimic day.

While

While pleas'd its harmless life to pass
 On hillock green of dewy grass,
 Attracted by its azure gleam,
 The butterfly, with sportive wing,
 Wou'd form the gay fantastic ring,
 (As in the burning noontide beam,)

Where, 'mid the gloom, this insect star display'd
 Its cheerful lamp,—spangling the realms of shade !

Near, on a mould'ring antique tow'r,
 The prison of its moping race,
 An owl had chose its murky bow'r,
 And hating day's effulgent light,
 Its joy the sullen frown of night,
 Its blank domain the silent space !

There, prompt to spread its shad'wy wings
 Imperious, o'er less daring things,
 Soon on the glow-worm's peaceful state
 Fix'd his dull eyes, in envious hate.

“ Bold worm ! ” exclaim'd the tyrant vain,
 “ Thou, who with sparkling light art seen
 “ Peering the lonely shades between,
 “ How dar'st thou mock my gloomy reign ?

“ Thou

“ Thou shalt expire !” The glow-worm meek,
(Its trembling light, more faint and pale,)
In humble accents, low and weak,
Thus told its true, but artless tale:
“ I own that, of the insect race,
“ I boast no gaudy splendid grace ;
“ I light with feeble lamp the way
“ Where prouder, loftier beings stray ;
“ I sip the balmy dews around—
“ But ne’er am heard with busy sound ;—
“ Ne’er on your calm repose obtrude
“ With counsel vain, or clamour rude ;
“ Can *I* offend superior things,
“ Or cope with birds of pow’rful wings ?”

The Owl, indignant, bold, and base,
Exulting o’er the insect race,
Replied—“ *You shine!* detested thing !
“ To me, offensive *light* you bring—”
Then, pouncing on his humble prey,
Darken’d, in death, its little ray ;
But found, tho’ quench’d the quiv’ring flame,
His sombre hour was still the same!



COURT OF WITNESSES.

"Thou shalt expire!" The glow-worm meek

(As trembling light, more faint and pale)

In humble accents, low and weak,

Thus told its tale; but gentle fate

"I own that of the insect race,

"I boast no gaudy splendid grace,

"I light with feeble lamp the way

"Where ponder, loiter, beings stray

"I tip the dainty dew around—

"But not my heart with pity found—

"Not on your calm, cool, steady course

"With careless vein, or careless tone

"Can I offend superior things,

"Of cope with birds of powerful wing!"

The Owl, indignant, bold, and base,

Exclaiming to the insect race,

Replied—"You know, I feel this thing

"To me, offensive, give you bring—"

Then, pouncing on his humble prey,

Darken'd, in death, its little ray;

But found, the quench'd, the quivering flame

"His sombre hour was still the same."

CHAP. XI.

SUPPLEMENT*.

French and Swiss in Russia—Their proscription—Oath required of them—Billet of absolution—Additional traits of the present emperor—Reflexions.

UNFORTUNATE young men, whom false accounts and fallacious hopes attract from various countries to the stormy banks of the frigid Neva, may you be at length undeceived by the sketches

* This article has been in part compiled by the editor from fragments and notes left by the author, and oral but indisputable information.—(*Note of the French editor*).

I have drawn, and those I am about to trace *. Of a thousand, who abandon their country to seek wealth and happiness at a distance from it, few find the former in Russia ; the latter, none. The rest sigh out their lives in penury and regret, or vegetate under the rigors of an inclement sky. The remembrance of their youthful sports, and the manners of their country, is the only pure pleasure which the most worthy taste. Amid the abundance and dissipation in which many pass their monotonous lives, they experience a vague disquiet, that alarms them : the heavy air of Russia seems to press on their brows, and bend them towards the earth : they grow old speedily ;

* It is no longer possible for a Frenchman or Swiss to enter Russia. An artist, and two Misses de Montbéliard, having been sent for to fill particular places, could not obtain leave to disembark, notwithstanding the strongest recommendations, and were ordered to depart immediately.

their

their blood thickens; and their soul becomes mere matter. Thus Ovid depicts the gradual metamorphosis of Daphne: the rude, unyielding bark envelopes her heart, which still beats, but feels no longer. She loses the faculty of thought, before she loses existence; and ceasing to live begins to vegetate.

Happy, however, he, who attains this animal vegetation! He is at least insensible of the revolting scenes that surround him, and of his own degradation; while the man, who retains his sensibility, is incessantly tormented by the indignation which degraded humanity inspires.

Of all the strangers who happened to be in Russia during the revolution, the French and Swiss were most exposed to inquisitorial vexations. The very name of Frenchman was an affront; and the Russian populace, who were in themselves peaceful,

peaceful, tolerant, and hospitable, were stirred up against them—Men who had before rendered themselves distinguished by their capacity, knowledge, and talents; many of whom held important posts at court or in the army, or confidential situations in private families; courtiers, officers, tutors, artists, players, chamberlains, cooks *, &c. instantly became objects of hatred, distrust, and proscription. Catharine, who had herself accustomed the Russians to some liberal opinions, on a sudden adopted the opposite principles. The death of Lewis XVI. and the arrival of the emigrants, were the signals of proscription. The emigrants particularly sought to accuse and supplant such of their

* One le Bœuf, French cook to the late king of Prussia, having been sent for by Catharine, did not arrive till after her death. The present emperor clapped him into prison. There he remained six months before he obtained his liberty, and then was ordered to depart immediately, without the slightest indemnification.

country-

countrymen as did not participate their opinions; and the ancient French, who beheld the light of the revolution from afar, without seeing the firebrand whence it issued, who embraced its principles with the more candor, because men of worth and letters had long borne them in their hearts, were the first attacked: cowards, knaves, hypocrites, and valets, who began loudly to exclaim against innovation, were alone spared.

One of the first victims was Cuinet d'Orbeil, who was known to all Petersburg, and even in other parts, by his poetical pieces in the *Almanachs des Muses*. He was a Frenchman of a warm heart, and warmth of expression; a poet in the common acceptation of the word, but incapable of undertaking anything, or plotting anything, at which the government could have reason to be alarmed. The court was at Peterhof, celebrating the

the festival of St. Peter. The fountains played, a ball was given, and the place was illuminated. These rejoicings attracted the more company, because the empress had not visited Peterhof for several years, as she had an aversion for that palace, which must have inspired her with gloomy thoughts*. In the midst of the feasting a courier arrived with news of the escape of Lewis XVI. The rumor was great, the joy loud, and the dance interrupted, while the news passed triumphantly from ear to ear. Count T——, who knew d'Orbeil, met him coming out of the empress's saloon. "Well, Mr. Democrat," said he to him, "have you heard the great news?"—"Yes," answered d'Orbeil, who was just come from Petersburg, "I have heard some great news."—"Do you know that the king

* Peterhof was the palace she inhabited at the period of the revolution in 1762. Peter III. was arrested there, and strangled in an adjacent house.

" has

“has escaped from Paris?”—“Yes,
 “count:—but do you know the still
 “greater news, that he is re-taken?”—
 These words were a clap of thunder to the
 hearers. The fact was, two couriers had
 arrived at Petersburg nearly at the same
 time; but he who announced the happy
 escape of the king having been dispatched
 immediately to the empress, to heighten
 the festivity of the day, no haste was
 made to send off the second to disturb it.
 The conversation of d’Orbeil with the
 count, however, having been in some de-
 gree pointed, he was from that time ob-
 served and watched. A short time after, a
 few expressions in favor of the revolution
 escaped him at la Hus’s, an actress kept
 by Markof, secretary of state: in conse-
 quence of which he was taken in the
 night, from the house of M. Tshernichef,
 conveyed to a vessel in the harbour, and
 put down into the hold. The surprise
 and

and fright turned his brain, he contrived to get out, and threw himself into the sea.

Such events occurred towards the end of Catharine's reign, when silly courtiers and emigrants besieged her with fears and suspicions; yet she was frequently seen to resume her justice, and even her natural generosity. At the time this happened, Mioche, another Frenchman, having been denounced as a patriot by the emigrants, was likewise thrown into prison: but Catharine soon ordered him to be set at liberty, and indemnified him for his sufferings by some particular exemptions which she granted him in the wine trade.

The present emperor makes the principles of justice consist in his infallibility. He cannot mistake; nobody can deceive him.

him. In consequence of this opinion of his, which is well known, they who wish to establish themselves in his good graces begin by confessing themselves guilty of some fault, even if they invent one for the purpose. Woe to him who endeavours to prove his innocence!

One of the most striking acts of injustice, which excited most indignation in honest men of all parties, was the proscription of colonel and major Masson, which distinguished the commencement of his reign.

These two brothers, who were either Swiss or Wirtembergers, had served in the Russian army from their youth, and acquired some reputation in it. One of them, who had been *aide-de-camp* to Potemkin, having made the campaigns against the Turks with him, had obtained as military rewards the cross and gold-hilted

hilted sword which Catharine bestowed on such officers as distinguished themselves. He had married a niece of the celebrated general Melissino, who died lately in the post of grand-master of the ordnance. The other, after having been some time in the artillery, and afterwards *aide-de-camp* to count Soltikof, minister at war *, had been placed about the person of the grand-duke Alexander, after the departure of colonel la Harpe. He had also married a Russian lady, of a Livonian family of distinction. Both of them, having an inclination for science and literature, led retired and tranquil lives with their families; beloved for the amenity of their manners, and esteemed for their wit and understanding. These two superior officers, who had been in the service twelve years, both married to

* He likewise finished the education of the two young * * *, whose merit does great honor to him.

Russian

Russian women, related to families of respectability, and possessing lands and slaves, were torn from their wives and children by a private order of state, and carried away separately, in covered sledges, under a strong guard, without even knowing of what crime they were accused. The wife of the younger, but just recovered from a lying-in, urged by despair, went the next day to wait for the emperor under the arches of his winter palace, and loudly demanded justice for her husband. "Your husband is guilty," answered Paul: "begone, lest you should be trampled on by my horse." The unfortunate lady fainted on the ground, and the emperor passed on. The indignation inspired by this act of power was recorded in a citation, which the friends and relations of Messrs. Masson ventured to publish; and of which the following is a literal translation.

"Pressing

“ Pressing citation and prayer to Messrs.
 “ von Masson, late officers in the Russian
 “ service*.

“ These two brothers served several
 “ years in the Russian empire, where
 “ they acquired the reputation of being
 “ men of courage and understanding.
 “ The elder was colonel, chevalier, &c.;
 “ the younger, major. Both were mar-
 “ ried; the former, to the daughter of
 “ general Yhrmann, a brave and respect-
 “ able soldier, lately dead, after having
 “ long and loyally served the state†; the
 “ latter,

* See the Journal intitl'd *La Minerve*, par M.
d'Archenholz, May 1797, p. 366. “ Ernstliche
 “ Aufforderung und Bitte, an die, in russischen diensten
 “ gestandenen, Herren von Masson.”

† General Yhrmann was governor-general of Sibe-
 ria, and director of the mines of Kholivan, for
 twenty years. The sums he drew from them were
 greater

“ latter, to a baroness Rosen, of a Livo-
 “ nian family, well known and esteem-
 “ ed *. Both had lovely children, and
 “ lived

greater than they ever yielded before or since, as the registers attest. He augmented the civilisation, population, commerce, and welfare of those vast provinces; and retired poor, after having long superintended the working of the richest gold and silver mines on the continent. As a reward of his probity, the crown did not even pay him 10,000 rubles (1000*l.*) which are still owing to him; and his only daughter, proscribed with her husband, wanders far from the tomb of her worthy father. She is likewise niece to the celebrated general Melissino, who has rendered Russia such great services; and related to the Dolgorukies and Soltikofs.
 —(*Note of the French Editor*).

* Catharine II. wishing to reduce Livonia to the same form of slavery as the other provinces, required, according to her custom, that the Livonians themselves should come to implore these new chains as a favor. The deputies were sent accordingly with those of the other nations: but general Rosen, father of the person here mentioned, who was at the head of the deputies, far from subscribing what was required of them, made some remonstrations to Catharine, who said with rage:
 “ Who gave you the boldness thus to oppose my
 “ will?”—“ The name of Peter the Great, who signed
 “ our

“ lived with their families as good fa-
 “ thers. The elder even possessed estates
 “ in Esthonia.

“ One day last December (1796), the
 “ two brothers were summoned before
 “ our liberties; and that of Catharine the Great, who
 “ has sworn to maintain them:” said the old man.
 Catharine the Great, however, displaced him, and or-
 dered other deputies to be appointed. Count Stackel-
 berg was found more compliant; and, proud of what
 Rosen considered as a disgrace, sold his country (1).
 He was rewarded by immense tracts of land, surround-
 ing those of the old general, which were taken from
 the states of the province. Such was the origin of
 the fortune and influence of Stackelberg, who so long
 ruled Poland, embroiled Sweden, and afterwards acted
 the buffoon in the antichambers of Zubof.

Beside her relations in Livonia, the wife of the
 younger Masson is related to several Russian families
 of considerable weight, as the Sievers, Besborodkos,
 Tamaras, &c. who, far from employing their influ-
 ence to obtain the restoration of her property, deserted
 her in her distress as soon as her husband was pro-
 scribed.—(*Note of the French Editor*).

(1) The words country, liberties, &c. when used of Russia or
 Livonia, relate to the nobility only; for the people are mere pro-
 perty.

“ general

“ general Arkarof, director-general of the
“ police. With him they found one
“ count de Plaisance, an officer in the
“ corps of cadets of the artillery, a man
“ whose very existence seems to accuse
“ nature of an illiberal joke. This man
“ had written a letter to Mosco, in
“ which he said to his friends, among
“ other things, ‘ Many jacobins * are sent
“ to the frontiers, and I am much afraid
“ Messrs. Masson will be served in the
“ same manner.’ This letter was opened
“ at the post-office, no doubt by order
“ from the sovereign, and gave occasion
“ to this disagreeable rendezvous. The
“ count de Plaisance defended his expres-
“ sion by the terrible charge, that Messrs.
“ Masson, when they read the newspa-
“ pers, had always taken the part of the
“ French. Messrs. von Masson avowed

* What the term jacobin signifies in Russia has been mentioned in a preceding chapter.

“ this ;

“ this ; but begged to know what infe-
 “ rence could be drawn from it deroga-
 “ tory to their character, their honor, or
 “ even their duty as Russian officers.
 “ The result of this business, as far as it
 “ has been made public and divulged,
 “ was, that the two brothers, without
 “ any farther information, were thrown
 “ into a *kibitka* *, and conveyed to the
 “ frontiers under a strong guard.

“ The wife of the younger Mr. von
 “ Masson fell at the feet of the emperor
 “ in the public street, and loudly ex-
 “ claimed : ‘ Justice ! justice ! and no
 “ favor !’ The emperor answered : ‘ They
 “ are guilty ; I love order in my coun-
 “ try :’ and would have passed on. Mrs.
 “ Masson, however, in despair seized the
 “ horse by the bridle ; on which the em-

*- A covered sledge used in Russia.

“ peror

“ peror told her, to take care she was not
 “ trampled under foot.

“ ‘ I had rather die,’ answered this
 “ courageous lady, ‘ than be the wife of a
 “ man who has forfeited his honor.’——
 “ It was in vain: the emperor spurred his
 “ horse, and went forward *.

“ All Petersburg has just witnessed the
 “ transaction. The emperor is just, and
 “ we presume, either that he has been
 “ deceived, or that Messrs. von Masson
 “ have in fact committed some crime,
 “ which at the time escaped notice †. It
 “ is

* The wives of the two brothers left their country to follow them, and their property was confiscated.

† As, to the great astonishment of their friends, Messrs. von Masson have not yet answered this citation, they give room for suspicion, that their proscription might have arisen from more serious causes than those mentioned above. Brought up on the heights of

“ is true we cannot explain the mystery
 “ in which the affair is involved : if they
 “ be

Mount Terrible, they perhaps imbibed there ideas which Russia could not stifle. The elder had been in the suite of Potemkin, and that of Zubof: the younger was at court, about the grand-duke Alexander, and under the protection of the empress:—had they not some concern in the project formed of placing that prince on the throne instead of his father? a project which Catharine entertained, and which occasioned many others to fall into disgrace at her death. Even Alexander was watched, and all the officers in his suite dismissed. They who know Russia, and remember, that a few officers of the guards, with Lestocq, a French surgeon, were sufficient to effect the revolution that placed Elizabeth on the throne, will not think this supposition improbable. It is known likewise, that the two Massons were among the principal members of a society, named the Philadelphic, founded by their uncle, general in chief Melissino, and into which several other generals or courtiers were admitted. This society, which was much talked of at Petersburg, appeared, it is true, to be rather a convivial meeting than a political assembly; and Catharine, to whom it was denounced, laughed at it: but the present emperor may have considered it in a different light; for at the same period the son of Melissino, commander of a regiment of grenadiers, and the chamberlain Mettles, a member of

“ be guilty, why are they spared? if
 “ they be innocent, why are they pu-
 “ nished? In the former case, we venture
 “ to observe, his majesty the emperor
 “ owes in some degree to his people the
 “ making known their crime; his people,
 “ who adore him, who repose all their
 “ confidence in his justice, and who
 “ would be wretched if they had to
 “ dread every secret informer.

of the same society, were also disgraced and exiled. Be
 it as it may, no doubt it might appear astonishing to
 one, unacquainted with the character of Paul, that
 two superior officers should be thus taken away from
 their families, without trial, and without cause. But
 he is known to have treated the agent of Sardinia with
 less ceremony, because Besborodko said of him, that he
 advised his court to remain an ally of France. Paul
 exclaimed in a fury: “ What! a jacobin at my
 “ court! let him depart instantly.” The Bavarian
 minister, Reglin, was likewise treated as a jacobin,
 put into a covered sledge, and conveyed to the frontiers
 as a criminal; and this because his master would not
 at once acknowledge Paul as grand-master of the order
 of Malta.

“ The undersigned, all of them rela-
 “ tions or friends of Messrs. von Masson,
 “ to whom it is consequently of impor-
 “ tance to develope this fatal secret, here
 “ solemnly require them to make their
 “ defence, if they be innocent : as men of
 “ honor, they owe this step to those,
 “ whose esteem they have gained by
 “ their agreeable acquaintance; they owe
 “ it even to the emperor, who has suf-
 “ ficient magnanimity perhaps to make
 “ reparation for the consequences of a
 “ precipitate act, if some villains have
 “ deceived him*.”

[Here follow the signatures of the friends and relations.]

To

* It is said, that the empress attempted to speak in
 favor of the younger Masson ; but the emperor or-
 dered her to be silent on the subject, threatening to
 punish her if she did not. Some time after he ordered
 her to be put under arrest for interceding on another
 occasion. Going his usual round of his palace of
 Pavlofsky,

To form a proper estimation of their courage, notwithstanding the caution employed in this citation, the circumstance of place, and the character of Paul must be fully known.

The following is another instance of the hardships which the French and their friends suffer at Petersburg. The French and Swiss protestants have a church at Petersburg, in which they permit the Germans also to

Pavloffsky, he caught a sentry asleep near his wife's pavilion. The unfortunate soldier was ordered the bastinado on the spot. At his cries the empress went to her window, and interceded for his pardon. "What!" exclaimed Paul, "dare you interrupt me in an act of military duty? Do you forget, madam, that I am your emperor also? I will make you remember it, however." At these words, he ordered his *aide-de-camp* to put the empress under arrest. The *aide-de-camp* hesitating, Paul threatened to reduce him to the ranks: accordingly the officer went to inform the empress that she was under arrest, and placed a guard at her door. This was the second time of her being thus served.

perform

perform public worship in their own language: but as the original funds of the church were furnished by the French, they retained the management of it. The Germans aspired to a perfect community of property in it, and commenced a lawsuit, which they lost. They entreated the protection of Paul, who ordered the senate to revise the sentence, which however they confirmed. The Germans made a fresh appeal, and Paul ordered sentence to be given in their favor. Mannsbændel of Muelhouse was the French minister, and count Gollofkin, a captain in the navy, was one of the elders of the church*. These took the liberty of making some remarks on the emperor's partiality. Mannsbændel was thrown into a dungeon, whence he was at length

* The family of the counts Gollofkin having been disgraced under the reign of Elizabeth, came into Holland, and embraced the protestant religion. Being afterwards recalled to Russia, it retained its religion, and is the only Russian family that professes protestantism.

liberated

liberated with injunctions to quit Russia: count Gollofkin received orders to quit Petersburg immediately; and then fresh orders to repair on board the ship he commanded, where on his arrival he was immediately turned before the mast.

At the news of the death of Lewis XVI. Catharine, seized with affright, took measures of safety against the French in Russia. They were enjoined to take the oath of allegiance to Lewis XVII. and to their holy religion; and swear hatred and detestation to the principles professed in France. From the lists printed by order of government, there were seven or eight hundred Frenchmen in Petersburg, and more in Mosco; all of whom found themselves compelled to comply with this injunction. A few only, who had been for some time preparing to return to France, where their property was, chose rather to depart within the space of a week, as the ukase enjoined in case of refusal.

refusal. This ukase was as absurdly composed, as it was inconsistently executed. Not only the French were obliged to take the oath, but almost all foreigners who spoke French, or who had their passports written in that language; so that Brabanters, Piedmontese, Milanese, and natives of Liege, were obliged to do homage to the king of France. It seemed as if the Russian police had foreseen the grand reunion, that was soon to take place, and wished to sanction it beforehand. Some natives of the thirteen cantons, Montbelliard, Neufchatel, and Wirtemberg, found themselves under the same compulsion. The grand-duke Paul exacted it from all foreigners in his suite indiscriminately; and several officiously anticipated his wishes and commands. A greater number, however, excused themselves, saying they were not born subjects of France; and prevailed on the police at least to listen to reason.

When

When Paul became emperor, he went much farther than his mother. He ordered all the strangers who were in Russia to profess the religion in which they had been brought up. Thus the catholics were enjoined strict observance of the rites and commands of the Romish church. An ukase in all the different languages was posted up, enjoining every one of them, under pain of being treated as rebels, not to defer the holy sacrament of penance, and to prepare themselves for receiving the host at Easter: at the same time the priests were ordered to give absolution only to such as should merit it. The catholic church, which had before been empty, was now crowded: and the priests belonging to it, French, Germans, Italians, and Poles, assumed their seats in their confessionals. Before every confessional a box was set up, into which the penitent was obliged to throw a card, containing his name, profession, and abode;

abode; and every evening these cards were carried to the emperor. The person confessed then received a ticket of absolution, signed by the priest, which admitted him to the communion table. This ticket was likewise a card of security to him, which he produced, when requisite, before the police. Innkeepers and housekeepers were directed to see these orders carried into execution with respect to persons lodging in their houses, and to inform against such as did not frequent the churches, or who wore pantaloons, round hats, or lapelled waistcoats. The sick were charitably informed, that they might require the confessor to attend them at home; and the poor, that the host should be carried to them gratis.

The reader may judge of the embarrassment of most of the French, who before this had lived in Russia as free as possible with regard to religious opinions, of which
the

the government took no notice. It was necessary to submit, however. The emigrants, who were depicted to Paul as libertines, were obliged to go to mass in form, walking two by two, between a double row of Russian soldiers.

Such catholics as were in easy circumstances soon found means of obtaining tickets of absolution, even without confessing. The priests sold them at first for fifty rubles (5*l.*) then twenty-five (2*l.* 10*s.*) and at last disposed of them for ten rubles (1*l.*) apiece, agreeing to throw the cards into the box themselves into the bargain.

A scene that passed near this catholic church deserves notice here. Paul caused a service to be celebrated in honor of the Duke of Wirtemberg, father of the empress, who had just died at Stutgard. As it was not in character for him to be present at this mass, he resolved to place himself

himself at the head of the grenadiers, who encompassed the church, to maintain order. It was extremely cold, and his horse, a native no doubt of a warmer climate, could not remain motionless. Weary of bridling, wheeling, and making useless efforts to keep him still, he began to gallop through the street, passing and repassing before the troops, and a great crowd of people, whom the funeral ceremony and the emperor's attendance had attracted. As Paul came galloping on, the crowd took off their hats, and bowed themselves. A group assembled on the green bridge, more than four hundred paces from the spot, at length put on their hats, on account of the coldness of the weather and the distance. Paul spied it, and ordered them immediately to be surrounded by the troops, and sent to the house of correction. There were fifty or sixty persons of various conditions: they who were not nobles were whipped three successive

ſucceſſive days, the nobles were degraded, and ſuch as were officers were turned into the ranks as common foldiers. Among them was a Geneveſe of the name of Martin, who bribed an officer of the police to allow him to write to ſome friends at court. In conſequence he was ſet at liberty, but, indignant at the inſult, he inſtantly left Ruſſia.

Some time after, Paul ordered the corpe of the unfortunate king of Poland to be interred in the ſame church. He came himſelf to examine the funeral decorations, and the preparations for the ceremony. An upholſterer, employed on the occaſion, was at the top of a ladder, dreſſed in a jacket and pantaloons to work more commodiouſly. Paul, being informed he was a Frenchman, named Leroux, ordered him to come down, and immediately commanded him to be baſtinadoed in the miſt of the church.

THESE

These are some of the vexations to which foreigners, Frenchmen in particular, are exposed in Russia. It is unquestionable, that their situation has become still more deplorable since Paul has declared war against France. What humiliations and insults have they been forced to undergo at the house of correction in Petersburg, as if it were the slave prison of Constantinople!

But this is not the worst. Frenchmen, after they have suffered these evils, may in vain demand an asylum even in their own country. They will be driven from it like the bird, seeking shelter in the tempest-beaten oak, which is forced away by the agitated branches. Liberty herself is a captive, and insulted in France: she is Bradamante fallen into the cave of Merlin.

Frenchmen coming from Russia are refused permission to re-enter France, under
pretence,

pretence, that they must have taken an oath to renounce their country. Ah, Frenchmen! do you forget how many contradictory oaths you yourselves have taken within the space of five or six years? Are those, which have been forced upon your unfortunate countrymen in foreign lands, alone to be religiously kept, at the very moment when you make sport of violating those which you yourselves have taken unanimously in the face of heaven and of France? At least consider the moment when this oath was exacted. It was when the head of Lewis had just fallen, and every monarch trembled for his own; when Leopold died, as report said, by poison; and Gustavus, as was asserted, by your assassinating weapons*; when Marat and Robespierre bore sway.

* At the court of Russia it was asserted, that the jacobins had assassinated Gustavus, and poisoned Leopold. It would have been dangerous there to seem to doubt it.

Judge

Judge of the dreadful alarm such news must produce in Russia. The French at Petersburg shut themselves up in their houses, and were afraid of being all massacred. The least they expected was a general proscription. I say now, as I thought then, Catharine, even at that juncture, displayed greatness and moderation. By the oath she required, she placed the French under the protection of the government, and saved them from the fury of the people. None of the allied powers, though reputed less barbarous, adopted a measure so humane. At the moment when the unfortunate French were massacred at Vienna, Naples, and Rome, a brother of Marat appeared in safety at the court of Catharine.



DESCRIPTION OF THE TAURIQUE PALACE,
*and of the Fête which Prince Potemkin
 gave there to Catharine II.**

THE Taurique palace was the place chosen by prince Potemkin for the splendid entertainment which he gave his sovereign, and which was considered as a testimony of gratitude for the greatness to which she had raised him. After the death of this favorite, Catharine chose it for her autumnal residence.

The façade of this building is composed of an immense colonnade, supporting a cupola. The entrance is into a grand

* As this palace has been frequently mentioned in the work, we have thought proper to add the following description of it, and of the entertainment which prince Potemkin gave there to his sovereign. It is taken from Storch's "Picture of Petersburg."

vestibule, communicating with the apartments on the right and left; and at the farther end is a portico, leading to a second vestibule of prodigious size, receiving light from the top, and surrounded at a great height by a gallery, intended for an orchestra, and containing an organ. From this a double row of pillars leads to the principal saloon, designed for grand entertainments. It is impossible to describe the impression made by this gigantic temple: it is more than a hundred paces long, wide in proportion, and is surrounded by a double row of colossal pillars, between which, at mid-height, are boxes ornamented with festoons elegantly sculptured, and lined with silk. From the vaulted roof are suspended globes of glass, which serve as chandeliers, and from which the light is infinitely reflected by looking glasses, placed at all the extremities of this vast hall. It has neither furniture, nor ornaments, except some vases
of

of Carrara marble, astonishing for their size and the beauty of their workmanship, placed at both ends of the saloon, which are rounded into semicircles. Near this saloon is the winter garden, separated from it only by the colonnade. The vault of this vast edifice is supported by pilasters in the form of palm-trees; within the walls are tubes, to conduct heat round the building; and canals of metal, filled with hot water, keep up an uniform temperature under this delightful parterre.

The eye wanders with rapture over plants and shrubs of every clime, rests with admiration on an antique bust, or views with astonishment the various fishes of all hues in crystal vases. A transparent obelisk reproduces to the eye, under a thousand different tints, these wonders of art and nature; and a grotto, hung with looking glasses, endlessly reflects them. The delicious temperature, the

intoxicating odour of the flowers, and the voluptuous silence of this enchanting place, plunge the mind into a pleasing reverie, and transport the imagination to the woods of Italy. The illusion continues, till destroyed by the aspect of all the rudeness and severity of winter, when the enchanted eye wanders out of the windows, and beholds the frost and snow surrounding this magnificent garden. In the midst of this elysium rises the majestic statue of Catharine II. in Persian marble.

On this theatre of his grandeur Potemkin arranged the preparations for the entertainment he gave his sovereign, before he departed for the southern provinces, where death awaited him. This favorite seemed to have a secret presage of his approaching end, and was desirous yet once more to enjoy all the plenitude of her favor.

The

The preparations for this entertainment were immense, like everything to which his imagination gave birth. He employed artists of all kinds for several months: more than a hundred persons assembled daily, to prepare themselves for the parts he had destined them to act, and every rehearsal was a kind of feast.

At length the appointed day arrived to gratify the impatience of the whole capital. Besides the empress and imperial family, prince Potemkin had invited all the court, the foreign ministers, the Russian nobility, and many individuals of the first ranks in society.

At six in the evening the entertainment was opened with a masked ball. When the carriage of the empress approached, meat, drink, and clothes, of all kinds, were distributed in profusion among the assembled populace. The empress
4 entered

entered the vestibule to the sound of lively music, executed by upwards of three hundred performers. Thence she repaired to the principal saloon, whither she was followed by the crowd; and ascended a platform, raised for her in the centre of the saloon, and surrounded by transparent decorations, with appropriate inscriptions. The company arranged themselves under the colonnade, and in the boxes; and then commenced the second act of this extraordinary spectacle.

The grand dukes Alexander and Constantine, at the head of the flower of all the young persons about the court, performed a ballet. The dancers, male and female, were forty-eight in number, all dressed in white, with magnificent scarves, and covered with jewels, estimated to be worth above ten millions of rubles (a million sterling). The ballet was performed to select airs, suitable to the occasion, and

and interspersed with songs. The celebrated Lepic concluded it with a *pas* of his own composing.

The company then removed to another saloon, adorned with the richest tapestry the Gobelins could produce. In the centre was an artificial elephant, covered with rubies and emeralds; and his cornac was a Persian richly clad. On his giving the signal, by striking on a bell, a curtain rose, and a magnificent stage appeared at the end of the apartment. On it were performed two ballets of a new kind, and a lively comedy, by which the company were much amused, concluded the spectacle. This was followed by chorus singing, various dances, and an Asiatic procession, remarkable for its diversity of dresses, all the people subject to the sceptre of the empress being represented in it.

Presently

Presently after, all the apartments, illuminated with the greatest care, were thrown open to the eager curiosity of the crowd. The whole palace seemed on fire: the garden was covered with sparkling stones; mirrors innumerable, pyramids, and globes of glass, reflected the magic spectacle in all directions. A table was spread with six hundred covers; and the rest of the guests were served standing. The table service was of gold and silver; the most exquisite dainties were served in vessels of the greatest richness; antique cups overflowed with the most costly liquors; and the most expensive chandeliers gave light to the table. Officers and domestics in great number, richly clothed, were eager to anticipate the wishes of the guests.

The empress, contrary to custom, remained till midnight. She seemed to fear her departure would check the happiness

pinefs of her favorite. When ſhe withdrew, numerous bands of fingers, and harmonious muſic, made the vaulted roofs of the palace reſound with a hymn to her honor. At this ſhe was ſo moved, that ſhe turned towards prince Potemkin to expreſs her ſatisfaction: he, overpowered by the ſentiment of what he owed his ſovereign, fell at her feet, took her hand, and watered it with tears. This was the laſt time it was in his power to teſtify his gratitude to the auguſt author of his grandeur in this place.

ADDITIONAL NOTE.

On Korfakof.

ON occasion of the retreat of the Russians from Switzerland, the following anecdote, taken from M. de Castéra's Life of Catharine, appeared in the public papers :

“ Korfakof, the empress's favorite, had a handsome
 “ face, and was of a very elegant figure ; but, possess-
 “ ing neither understanding nor knowledge, he was as
 “ incapable as Zoritz of diminishing the influence of
 “ Potemkin. A single fact will display his character.
 “ As soon as he had obtained the post of favorite, he
 “ conceived a man like him ought of course to have a
 “ library. Accordingly he sent for the most celebrated
 “ bookseller in Petersburg without delay, and inform-
 “ ed him, that he wanted books for his house at Va-
 “ filtchikof, of which the empress had just made him
 “ a present. The bookseller asked what books he
 “ wanted. ‘ You understand that better than I,’
 “ answered the favorite ; ‘ it is your business : but
 “ there must be great books at bottom, and little ones
 “ at top ; as they are at the empress's.”

We

We are far from disputing the truth of this anecdote, which has been confirmed to us by several credible persons to whom the bookfeller related the story at the time: but we must inform our readers, that the newspapers, when they inserted it, confounded the favorite Korfakof with another of the same name, who commanded the Russian army in Switzerland. General Korfakof is a man of sense, and by no means destitute of knowledge: he made the campaign in Flanders under prince Cobourg, and well knows what a library is.

THE END.

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